





Wooler, John Pratt, 1824-1868.

Allow me to apologize.

Allow me to apologize.

A faint heart which did win a fair
lady.

A hunt for a husband.

Laurence's love suit.

The maid of honour.

A man without a head.

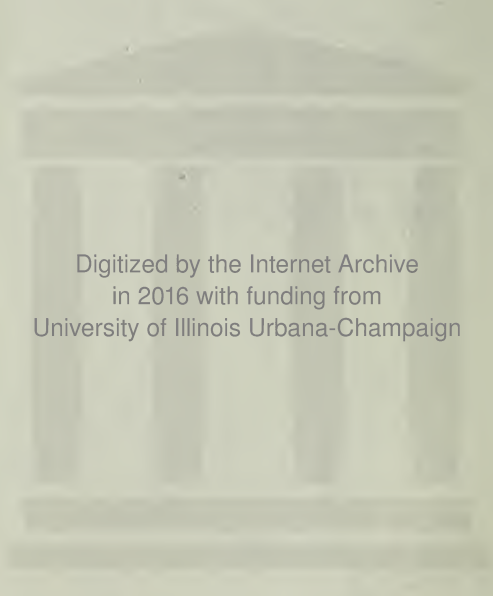
Old Phil's birthday.

Orange blossoms.

Orange blossoms.

Sisterly service.

The wilful ward.



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Wooden (g)



Allow me to Apologize.

GATH. (pointing to Sir Petu & the Ladies) Isay who are
those three lovely woman.

Act 1. Scene

ALLOW ME TO APOLOGIZE.

A F A R C E,

IN

One Act.

By J. P. WOOLER, Esq.

Author of Love in Livery, Founded on Facts, A Man without a Head, &c, &c,

THE ONLY EDITION CORRECTLY MARKED, BY PERMISSION,
FROM THE PROMPTER'S BOOK.

To which is added,

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUME—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—
THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS,
SITUATIONS—ENTRANCES—EXITS—PROPERTIES, AND
DIRECTIONS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE
London Theatres.

EMBELLISHED WITH A FINE ENGRAVING,
By Mr. Findlay, from a Drawing, taken expressly in the Theatre.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY DUNCOMBE AND CO.
17, HOLBORN BARS.



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W882a

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

<i>Sir Peter Pedigree</i>		Mr. G. Cooke
<i>Goliath Goth</i>		Mr. Compton
<i>Captain Seymour</i>		Mr. Norton
<i>Fanny Fairlove</i> (Goth's Ward.)		Mrs. Murray
<i>Mary Myrtle</i>	} Wards of }	Miss Adams
<i>Harriett Seymour</i>		
	} Sir Peter }	Miss L. Howard
<i>Kitty, (Fanny's Maid)</i>		Miss E. Turner

COSTUME.

Sir Peter Pedigree—Black coat and breeches, white vest, black silk stockings short black gaiters, low crowned hat.
Goliath Goth—1st. Dress velvet shooting coat, large chequered plaid trowsers scarlet plaid vest. 2nd. dress, salmon coloured beaver coat, crimson silk neck kerchief, white hat. 3rd. dress, beaver coat turned.
Captain Seymour—Fashionable modern suit,
Fanny Fairlove—1st. Dress, fashionable muslin dress 2nd. dress black frock coat and trowsers, white vest, hat, &c.
Mary Myrtle
Harriette Seymour } Fashionable modern dresses,
Kitty—Figured dress apron and cap.

Produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre, October 28th.,
 1850. Time, 45 minutes.

Gen. Res. 24 Fe 49, Spencer

ALLOW ME TO APOLOGIZE.

SCENE 1.—*Room in an Hotel. near Hastings. Table and two Chairs. Bell on table.*

Enter Goliath Goth smoking a cigar, and Fanny Fairlove,
R. H.

Goth. (L.) Well—there—what a fuss you make about the thing. *(throws cigar away)*

Fan. (R.) But my dear sir—consider—you shortly leave for Sir Peter's, and how can the ladies sit down with a man smelling of tobacco?

Goth. I don't see why they shouldn't, *you* do at home—but I've thrown the cigar away and there's an end of it.

Fan. Certainly—there again—although I am myself particularly fond of the air of "Yankee Doodle" I can't say that I like to hear it whistled at table.

Goth. What's a fellow to do when he is done eating and can't think of any thing to say! I think the people liked it, and if they didn't they might have said so—I should have been very happy to apologize.

Fan. As you please—and what sort of folks are these we are about to visit?

Goth. There are two young women I don't know, and one old man I do—he's a decent sort of a fellow enough—but he's got such a confounded lot of dead relations—how he keeps 'em all in his head I don't know—when he met me the other day—he began a long story about his great grandmother's, brother's, aunt's first cousin's sister's son he made me quite giddy, so I was obliged to apologize and cut off in the middle of it.

Fan. But touching the ladies?

Goth. I never touched 'em.

Fan. No, no—but may I ask whether you purpose favouring either of them with your devotion, and if so, which?

Goth. Why my dear Fanny, you see. I was rather aground in that matter, and to avoid any blunder I mean to make love to 'em *both*.

Fan. I fear sir, you may get into some dilemma by such a proceeding.

Goth. I'll trouble you, Miss Fairlove, to keep your fears to yourself—and now I don't know which of the two to begin with—stop—I'll toss myself—heads—Miss Myrtle—tails, Miss——

Fan. For love's blessed sake Mr. Goth, don't do any thing so vulgar.

Goth. Hem! Never mind—I'll take them as they come!

Fau. And pray sir, let me counsel you to be cautious in your love making, there is one right way and several wrong ways of doing it.

Goth. I don't know whether you are aware whom you are addressing Miss Fairlove—but whoever you may take me to be, I am Mr. Goliath Goth.

Fan. I never for an instant sir, took you for any body else, it would be impossible sir to mistake you for another.

Goth. I should think so. I suppose this dress 'll do for the morning eh? I can trim up a bit for dinner.

Fan. For shame sir—visit ladies in a velveteen shooting jacket!

Goth. Well, I can apologize.

Fan. But sir, if either of these ladies be fascinated with you.

Goth. If!

Fan. I am aware of the great improbability of the reverse, but it would then be necessary for me to choose a husband, that I may leave your house clear for your wife.

Goth. Hem! Perhaps it would be as well. I'll find you one.

Fan. Eh sir, I couldn't think of putting you to so much trouble on my account—If I might suggest Captain Seymour.

Goth. I beg to apologize for the remark, but Captain Seymour may go to the devil—who is he? Who knows him? A fortune hunting—

Fan. Indeed sir.

Goth. And indeed Miss—I won't hear his name. I never saw him, and never wish—where you picked the fellow up—there now don't speak—I'm going to dress—I shan't be long—although I dress for conquest, I've no idea, as somebody says—of gilding refined gold. *Exit 1. R. L.*

Fan. Aye, and a very refined specimen you are, but I

must and will find a way to outwit the great bear—a rude intolerable creature! Charming! named—for surely a greater *Goth* was never stared at. (*knocks at door R.*)

Enter Seymour. R.

Sey. (R.) Dearest Fanny!

Fan. (L.) Oh! Seymour—Seymour—how could you venture here?

Sey. To be near you, where else can I exist?

Fan. Do you know Mr *Goth* is even now in this very hotel.

Sey. So much the better, I am determined openly to demand your hand from him, for I can and will live no longer without you.

Fan. You will ruin all by such imprudence, leave it all to time.

Sey. Time! Oh Fanny! How can this coldblooded shallow brained fellow *Goth*—

Fan. Remember, sir, he *was* my father's friend and *is* my guardian.

Sey. Guardian! Goaler! Tyrant! I can no longer endure to see you only clandestinely, as if I were ashamed of my gait. I hurried off the instant I received your note—pray what brings you to *Hastings*?

Fan. We are about to visit a friend of Mr. *Goth*—our Sir Peter Pedigree.

Sey. (aside) The devil! I feared as much!

Fan. You are surprised! do you know him?

Sey. Dear Fanny, I will conceal nothing from you. I knew this Sir Peter was a friend of your guardian, and so I withheld my connexion with him—but he is in fact a guardian of mine.

Fpn. Ah!

Sey. In truth, my sister and myself have been under his protection from infancy for the greater part of our lives he lived near Bath.

Fan. Near Bath! Your sister's name

Sey. Harriette!

Fan. My stars! Here's a discovery!

Sey. You seem surprised. Do you know her

Fpn. Who? Your sister? I—oh, no! But pray dear Seymour go—if Mr. *Goth* should return—

Sey. I desire it, I will insist on his leaving your choice uncontrolled—and—

Fan. Indeed you must so no such thing, it is my request!

Sey. In anything else I am your slave, on that point I am firm

Fan. We leave directly for Sir Peter's,

Sey. I will follow, brave my guardian's anger, and break the stubbornness of yours.

Fan. You determine on this?

Seyt. I do firmly.

Fan. Then be it so, you will repent it—I warn you—go sir!

Sey. Dearest Fanny!

Fan. You will compel me to summon my guardian sir, and if you do, you'll never see me again—go!

Sey. Fanny I obey you now, but expect to see me at the Hall before the sun sets. I shall go wild if I delay longer!

Fan. Ha! Ha! Poor Seymour! But now what shall I do, there is some very great fun arising for me out of this, and some confusion for other people. I shall punish Seymour too, because I love him so dearly—my poor guardian will certainly require a guardian angel of some kind, if he is going to make love to two girls at once—hem! It's very lucky I have the dress with me—I certainly *will* do it—Eh!

Re-enter Goth dressed in a very outrageous fashion. l. E. L.

Goth. Now Miss Fairlove, I'll trouble you to bustle and not keep me waiting.

Fan. I'm very sorry, but I have several old friends in Hastings whom I must visit, so shall not have the honour of joining you at the hall until the evening.

Goth. Oh! Very well, I dare say we shall manage to jog on without you, besides, I shall have the girls to myself all day. and if I don't send them to bed with a strong heartache apiece I'm no Goth. (*crosses to R.*) Allow me to apologize for running away—but—good morning *Exit R. l. E.*

Fan. I certainly will treat myself this once. (*rings bell on table.*) How singular that I should never have discovered that my old flame and my new one were brother and sister,

Enter Kitty. l. E. L.

Fan. Oh! Kitty—here—ahem! I dare say you have often wondered at a certain dress I always carry among my wardrobe?

Kit. What! The coat and trou—

Fan. (*R.*) Hush! Yes! I am compelled to take it with me, for fear any one should discover them. Now I want them out—brushed and put ready for me!

Kit. La! Miss!

Fan. Listen to me Kitty—last year when at Bath, I was persuaded by some giddy girls—though none more giddy than myself—to disguise myself as a man, and was so

introduced to a Miss Seymour, I took, for the want of a better, my guardian's name, passing as Mr. Goliath Goth—this young lady did me the honor to fall in love with me. I enjoyed the sport, and carried it on for a week, meeting her &c. At last I left Bath, and partly by the persuasion of my friends, and partly from a mischievous whim of my own, left the secret undiscovered and my lady-love, in total ignorance how little I was entitled to the sex I had assumed.

Kit. La Miss—how nice!

Fan. And there I thought the freak would end, but to my astonishment I find one of the young ladies at the house we are about to visit, is my very Bath sweetheart!

Kit. I see—Miss—how beautiful!

Fan. And moreover, a sister of Captain Seymour

Kit. Well if ever!

Fan. Now mind Kitty, if he comes here, deny me, and for fear he should return now (*crosses to L.*) I will finish my story and tell you my plans in my room, come!

Kit. Yes Miss! I certainly—never! *Exit. L.*

SCENE 2.

Garden of Pedigree Hall.

Enter Harriette and Mary. 2 E. L.

Har. (R.) Could any thing have happened more deliciously?

Mary. (L.) For you perhaps, but to me what is it?

Har. Oh, my dear! One husband will only serve for one woman; but was it not strange—fancy—Sir Peter's accidentally meeting an old friend of his, and inviting him here—and that he should turn out to be an old friend of mine—actually dear Mr. Goth.

Mary. Very strange and pleasant—as Sir Peter is determined that he shall marry one of us—I need hardly say it will be—but what a remarkable name?

Har. It is rather—not that I dislike it—and he himself is the most elegant, accomplished, fascinating fellow you ever saw.

Mary. You met him at Bath I think!

Har. Yes—hush! Sir Peter!

Enter Sir Peter Pedigree. L. 2. E.

Sir P. (L.) Well girls, on the look out, eh?

Mary. (C.) Pray sir what sort of a person is Mr. Goth's ward, Miss Fairlove?

Sir. P. Don't know my dear—never saw her—met Mr Goth by accident—hadn't seen him since my aunt's second husband's brother lived in London.

Mary. What sort of a person is Mr. Goth himself?

Sir P. Ahem! Well—he's very rich.

Har. (R. to *Mary*.) The idea of speaking of his money before his person.

Mary. But in appearance sir, I mean.

Sir P. Why—he's very like a nephew of the brother in law of a third cousin of mine.

Har. (to *Mary*.) Gracious! What profanation!

Mary. But sir, as we had not the happiness of his acquaintance, would you be kind enough to sketch him for our information.

Sir P. Well—he's tall.

Har. (to *Mary*.) Not so very tall dear,

Sir P. Red face!

Har. Good heaven's, Sir Peter—his face is no redder than mine.

Sir P. And pray how do you know?

Har. I mean—I should guess it was not. (to *Mary*.) it's a perfect falsehood dear!

Sir P. Rather unmeaning eyes.

Har. Sir, this is a down right libel! (to *Mary*.) The most lovely eyes in the world.

Sir P. You seem to know a great deal about it Harriette. (Ringing at gate bell. C. L.) Hark! He is here, and you can judge for yourselves. (Going up centre.)

Har. (to *Mary*.) Now dear, you shall see—Sir Peter ought to be ashamed of himself to burlesque and traduce people so—Mr. Goth is grace and perfection itself!

Sir P. Here he comes!

Mary. Is that he coming up the walk?

Har. What! That fright of a creature! Why you are as bad as Sir Peter.

Enter Goth through gate centre. L. H.

Sir P. (R. E.) My dear Goth!

Har. (R.) What!

Mary. (R. to *Har*.) I can't hardly agree with your taste. dear!

Sir P. I'm delighted to see you!

Har. (to *Mary*) Good heavens! This is not Mr. Goth!

Goth. (L.) Hope you're pretty hearty.

Sir P. Allow me to present you to my wards Miss Harriett Seymour—Miss Mary Myrtle.

Goth. (bowing) Uncommon pretty names and uncommon pretty girls.

Mary. (aside to *Har*.) How refined! (*Goth and Sir Peter talks apart*.)

Sir P. And where is your ward Mr. Goth?

Goth. Oh! She's blundering about Hastings somewhere, and told me to apologize, and she'd be here to night. (*aside*) how sulky the women look.

Sir P. So—we are both in the guardian line Mr. Goth—it was rather civil of my two friends to die and leave me their children, eh! But it runs in our family—my great uncle's father's cousin had four wards in his hands at once, and my grandmother's brother's wife was a ward of my great grandfather when she married my grandmother's brother.

Goth. (*aside*) How the deuce can he find his way through so many grandmother's and brother's wives! (*aloud.*) Yes—it's very singular—very.

Sir P. And there was my cousin's second wife's sister who—

Goth. Yes—I understand—allow me to apologize for interrupting you—but how do you keep so many relations, together in your head.

Sir P. Nothing easier! You must know that ever since my great uncle by the mother's side——

Goth. Ah! Yes! I see it all now—it's quite clear.

Sir P. Gadsheart I must go and see to your horses and my fools will be at something wrong—leave you to the girls!

Exit. C, L. H.

Goth. (*L. aside*) Now for the females!

Mary (*C. to Har.*) How fascinating he looks!

Har. (*R. to Mary.*) You are as spiteful as you can be, Mary—I shall leave you. (*crosses to Goth*) I beg a thousand pardons Mr. G—sir, but I have a duty to discharge within doors, Miss Myrtle will entertain you. *Exit L. 2.*)

Goth. (*aside*) So much the better one at a time—I shall go slap ahead.

Mary. I am afraid you will find our house very dull Mr Goth.

Goth. Well Miss, I dare say I shall

Mary. (*aside*) How polite! (*aloud*) I am sorry we have no better means of amusement at command.

Goth. Well the old man might have thought of something too. I'm very lively myself in general, but to be shut up in a box in the country, some few miles from anywhere I ever heard of, is rather a damper, in fact to use a strong expression—it's a damn——

Mary. Mr. Goth, pray!

Goth. 'Pon my soul I forgot—allow me to apologize! My dear Miss, (*aside*) I'm beginning the wrong way I think! (*aloud.*) I'm going to let you into a bit of my

confidence—I've got a particularly fine house in town—which—particularly well as it is furnished—wants one thing in particular!

Mary. Indeed sir—and that is—?

Goth. A particularly pretty wife.

Mary. Well, Mr. Goth, I am sure there are many ladies who would be but too happy to supply that trifling deficiency—very many.

Goth. Yes, Miss—but I don't want very many. I only want *one* at a time.

Mary. Your moderation does you credit, sir.

Goth. (*aside*.) I'll make a bold charge. (*aloud*.) Miss will *you* be that *one*?

Mary. I sir! You are surely trifling with me.

Goth. Not yet—Miss—come—there—I'll marry you—that's a fair proof—that I'm not in jest.

Mary. I'm very highly honoured sir—but—

Goth. Engaged! Eh! To whom? Name the man—pistols—knives—horsewhips—

Mary. Dear me, Mr. Goth, you frighten me.

Goth. Allow me to apologize!

Mary.) And even if I were not engaged, I should imagine our very short acquaintance would render it of no moment to you.

Goth. If you were Miss, I should instantly go to town, order an iron bedstead, a straight jacket, and the perpetual attendance of a mad doctor.

Mary. And are you sure Mr. Goth, you have no prior attachment. (*aside*.) I've an idea!

Goth. Miss Myrtle—I have hitherto avoided the sex, in spite of their attempts upon me.

Mary. Were you not slightly struck with Miss Seymour!

Goth. Pooh! Absurd! Now this shall be secret if you please, I took rather an aversion to that young woman than otherwise.

Mary. You must remember she is my friend Mr. Goth

Goth. Pray—allow me to apologize a thousand times! but my dear Miss—say you will be Mrs. G.—the respected maternal parent of a flourishing little family of G's.

Mary. Really—the anticipation of so much honour overcomes me, but—Sir Peter may object.

Goth. Who? The old boy! Bless you he invited me down on purpose to get one of you girls off his hands—I believe if I could marry the pair I should be welcome for him.

Mary. (*aside*) Well! I'm sure! (*aloud*) I admit Mr. Goth that you possess all the qualifications which a wo.

man could desire in a husband.

Goth. I am not aware of any one that's missing. (*aside.*) a very discerning young female.

Mary. You have an elegant appearance. (*Goth looks elegant*) polished manners (*he looks polished*) a high fund of humour. (*he looks funny*) and as for beauty, (*he looks unutterably*) why—you don't require it, (*he looks as if he didn't*)

Goth. *aside*) That's what you call a negative compliment. but perhaps she's rather short sighted (*aloud*) Yes Miss, and in addition to these good qualities, I have five thousand a year, which are considered as five thousand other good qualities, and all fresh ones every year.

Mary. Undoubtedly sir.

Goth. I am sure you have some good qualities too, eh? Miss Myrtle, would you enumerate them? [*aside*) that was delicately put, I think.

Mary. [*aside*] Why the wretch is trying to find out what I'm worth. (*aloud*) that is a question I'm unprepared to answer Mr. Goth.

Goth. Allow me to apologize for asking—but my dear Miss shall we be a pair—the wonder, envy, and admiration of an extensive and salubrious neighbourhood?

Mary. I must really beg time for a little reflection, Mr. Goth.

Goth. Oh! Very well—but it can't want much I guess—I'll just take one kiss.

Mary. Mr Goth you forget yourself. (*crosses to L.*)

Goth. Allow me to apologize!

Mary. (*aside*) Now to find Harriette, and concert a scheme for outwitting this excessively disagreeable man.

Exit. L. 2. E.

Goth. There's one member of the family disposed of, If I only which of these two speculations had the most of the requisite, I should be right—Old Pedigree's coming—I'll institute a pump here.

Enter Sir Peter. D. L.

Sir. P. (L) I saw you my boy—talking to my Polly.

Goth. (R *aside*) MY Polly—I flatter myself.

Sir P. Ah! Sad dog—just like my father's wife's sister's brother—why sir that man—

Goth. Yes, I know he did—accept my apology—I heard you say so before. I suppose Sir Peter your wards, like mine, are not very expensive, eh? Plenty of loose cash I ought to apologize for—

Sir P. Not at all—Oh! Yes, they're pretty warm—they won't go beggars to their husbands—Harriette is the

icher though.

Goth. (*aside*) Harriette must be Mrs Goth. I must apologize to the other.

Sir P. But they are both good girls—and handsome ones too—eh?

Goth. Yes, But I think there's more of what you call female attraction about Miss Harriette.

Sir P. (*aside*) The wind blows in that quarter! Well, he'll do for either. (*aloud*) well, perhaps there is—she is very like a portrait I have of my wife's second cousin's sister's daughter who—

Goth. Yes, surprising likeness? There is Miss Harriette—I'll go and have a chat with her, (*crosses to L.*)

Sir P. And I'll go to the stables—uncommonly fond of horses, there was my grandmother's cousin's aunt's brother, who—

Goth. Yes, I remember him perfectly—I really must apologize for running away—I shall miss the Lady. *Exit.*
2 E. L.

Re. enter Goth, 2 E. L.

Sir P. Hem! Ah! great fool! but very rich—a good match—but a great fool—let him marry Harriette—wish he may—one off my hands—very rich, but—a great fool!
Exit. C. L.

Har. (*L.*) Ah! This is all very well Mr. Goth, but I fear you have said similar fine things to Mary (*aside.*) our plan must succeed.

Goth. (*R.*) Who's the young lady? Do I know her?

Har. Oh! I dare say you are very innocent—so you don't know Mary who was with you here just now?

Goth. Oh! That young person, yes, she was here just now bothering about something

Har. Bothering! Fie Mr. Goth!

Goth. Allow me to apologize, but it's so deuced awkward to be dodged about one woman, when your head's full of another.

Har. May I ask what other Mr. Goth?

Goth. Can you ask exquisite Harriette? Have I eyes?

Har. Indeed a most expressive pair!

Goth. Look on them again—Miss Harriette—and see if you cannot guess who the other is?

Har. I daren't (*aside*) I wonder if he means to look fascinating.

Goth. (*aside*) They've done the business—my eyes never failed me yet. (*aloud*) yes, you do guess—Harriette—may I say my Harriette? Let me say my Harriette, or I am a lost hopeless Goth!

Har. Which you undoubtedly are. (*aloud*) your persuasion is powerful sir.

Goth. Yes, I flatter myself I have a peculiar style of making love, a style entirely my own.

Har. (*aside*) Yes; the "florid Gothic style!" (*aloud*) but I thought Mr. Goth, you seemed at first to be struck with Miss Myrtle.

Goth. Oh come. That's too good—very funny—Miss Myrtle—now my dearest Harriette, allow me to apologize for that expression—I adore women—generally—the whole sex—and never met one that I took a positive aversion to till I met that repugnant young female.

Har. (*aside.*) The hypocrite!

Goth. (*aside*) Which young female I hope will not return in a hurry.

Har. I really feel highly flattered by your offer, Mr. Goth.

Goth. Don't mention it, I dare say you'll do your best to deserve me.

Har. (*aside.*) Well, I never! (*aloud*) I hardly see how I can refuse

Goth. Well, I hardly see how you can myself. (*aside.*) 'pon my soul I'm a dangerous fellow! I only hope I'm not throwing myself away here, ,

Har. You are so modest—so delicate—so accomplished!

Goth. (*aside*) It's very strange that none of those stupid London women could ever find out all this.

Har. And if I surrender myself to you, will you still love me, when your young and ardent spirit is tamed by maturer years.

Goth. Dearest! Then I'll love you more! Say, will you take these eligible premises, in thorough repair, and warranted unencumbered.

Har. Oh! Mr. Goth! You are irresistible—I am your's! (*Harriette waves her handkerchief*)

Goth. I've got a wife? What a queer sensation, (*aloud*) Very good—then that affair's settled, and I am happy—(*aside*) I suppose! *Re-enter, L. 2. E. Mary who crosses to R.*

Har. (*aside*) He takes his happiness very coolly.

Goth. One kiss will seal this important——

Har. Don't—pray—here's Mary!

Mary. (*coming down R. and aside to him*) How dare you attempt to kiss another girl after what you said to me?

Goth. (*D. aside*) Here's a pretty go! (*to Mary.*) Allow me to apologize it was her fault.

Mary. (*to Goth.*) Well, get rid of her, I have something

to say to you, dear Mr. Goth.

Goth. (aside) Dear Mr. Goth! That sounds singular!

Har. (to Goth) My dear Mr. Goth what are you whispering to Mary about?

Goth. (to Mary) Oh nothing—wait a moment. *(to Mary)* just go into that walk down there, till I get rid of her.

Mary (to him) I'm not disposed to leave you together, apologize to her and come with me.

Goth. (aside) Friend Goliath! It strikes me you have put your handsome foot pretty deep into it here

Mary (to him) Dear me! how stupid you seem.

Goth. (aside) I dare say I do.

Har. (to him) I'm sure there's something wrong here!

Goth. (aside) I've a loose kind of idea there is.

Mary. Harriette dear, have you any thing particular to say to Mr. Goth as you remain so close to him.

Goth. (aside) There'll be a row directly.

Har. No love, nothing—have you.

Mary. Oh! dear no—I wish dear, you'd run and fetch my handkerchief from the breakfast room.

Har. How singular! I was just going to ask you to fetch mine.

Goth. Shall I go and fetch them both?

Mary. On no account, we'll go ourselves. *(to him.)* I don't leave you together, come Harriette, *(crosses to L.)*

Har. Yes dear. *(to him.)* I'll mention your offer to my guardian—now Mary

Mary. (to Har.) Now for Sir Peter! *(Exeunt Mary and Har. L. 2, E.)*

Goth. (looking after them.) Mention my offer! Which offer, I should like to know.

Re-enter Mary. L. 2. E.

Mary. I've just escaped from Harriette to put your mind at ease—I cannot resist your attractions—and dear Mr. Goth—I'm your's—no thanks—Harriette will miss and suspect me! *(Exit L.)*

Goth. (Looking bewildered.) I've got two wives! I must make an apology to myself and use a strong expression—I'm in a damned fix.

(Enter Fanny en cavalier, L. C.)

Fan. (L.) Mr. Goth!

Goth. (R.) That involved individual! And pray who are you?

Fan. Sir, I have had the distinguished honor of being in your company on several occasions in town—you may perhaps forget them—my name is Jenkins.

Goth. Oh! Well I do somehow forget, Mr. Jenkins—but

as you are a friend you could never show your friendship more seasonably, for I am in a deuce of a mess.

Fan. You can command me, sir.

Goth. Are you known here.

Fan. Sir Peter's an old friend.

Goth. You know the ladies?

Fan. Extremely well.

Goth. Well, I wanted to marry one of 'em—so I thought I'd propose.

Fan. That is a usual step I believe—have you done it?

Goth. Why yes, I think I have done it—rather.

Fan. And which is to be happy Mrs. Goth.

Goth. 'Pon my soul I hardly know.

Fan. I scarcely understand you, sir, to which have you proposed?

Goth. Both!

Fan. Oh! Nonsense!

Goth. That's precisely what I think of it—but what's to be done? I can't marry the pair

Fan. Not exactly—as I rather want one of them myself.

Goth. By all means, Mr. Jenkins, which? You can take your choice, only you can't have Harriette.

Fan. Thank you—you are in a very awkward dilemma, Mr. Goth.

Goth. Don't you think I'd better apologize,

Fan. Pooh! That won't do.

Goth. Won't it—then I don't see what will.

Fan. I think I can help you out of it.

Goth. My dear Pipkin if you would—name any thing I can do for you.

Fan. Thank you sir, will you promise to grant me the first favour I shall ask of you?

Goth. On the word of a Goth.

Fan. Very well then, let me see! Ha! I have it—there is no other way for it but to—sham mad!

Goth. Eh? What?

Fan. Yes—get it hinted that you are occasionally subject to harmless fits of aberration—under the influence of which you commit acts of folly—of which on recovery you have no recollection and consequently are not responsible for—so both offers will be annulled, and you can begin afresh.

Goth. Pooh! I can't go mad.

Fan. Very well as you please—it is nothing to me.

Goth. But how am I to do it?

Fan. Oh! Say all sorts of things—that will not give you much trouble—and play one or two antics—you can't

stand on your head for a few minutes ?

Goth. Not comfortably !

Fan. Well, do and say whatever comes first—here comes the ladies and Sir Peter—I suppose they have told him all for he seems in a rare temper.

Goth. I will instantly apologize.

Fan. Pooh ! Make up your mind—will you be mad or no.

Goth. Well I suppose I must—but it's deuced awkward.

Fan. Then go off at once, and leave me to break it to them—mind—try and look as mad as you can.

Goth. Don't be alarmed Mr. Jenkins. when I make up my mind to do a thing—I do it—and no mistake about the matter. Just apologize to the ladies for my abrupt departure. (*Exit R.*)

Fan. Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! So I get my guardian out of his dilemma, at the very small expense of making him look ridiculous—now for the recognition of my "Bath companion," and then—but enough for the present.

Enter Sir Peter in a rage. Mary and Har. L. 2. E.

Sir P. (C.) Where is this Goth, I'll teach him to insult a man whose great grandmother's uncle's brother fought at Blenheim.

Fan. (R.) Your servant, sir.

Har. (L. D. to Mary.) Good heavens ! This is my dear Mr. Goth !

Sir Peter. Who the deuce are you sir ?

Fan. A friend of Mr. Goth's, sir, hearing he was on a visit here, I took the liberty of calling. (*kisses his hand to Har. behind Sir P.*)

Sir P. And a pretty fellow he is.

Har. (to Mary.) Now has he got a red face and unmeaning eyes ?

Mary. (L. to Har) He's charming !

Fan. May I ask the cause of your displeasure, sir ?

Sir P. Cause sir—do you see these two girls sir—an insult has been offered to them sir, for which same insult a great uncle of mine, by a third marriage. pinned a man to a tree with his sword, while he went to get a rope to hang him sir.

Mary. It's shameful.

Har. Delicious—I mean abominable !

Fan. Pray sir, what may be the nature of this insult ?

Sir P. Why sir, this man—or rather this Goth—who has feloniously stolen the shape of a human being—has had the brazen audacity to propose marriage to both in one half hour.

Mary. Monstrous !

Hor. Though mind, I never wanted him, odious creature

Sir P. And pray sir, what have you got to say to that?

Fan. I can only pity his misfortune sir.

Sir P. You mean his cursed impudence.

Fon. Pardon me, Sir Peter, it is a painful thing, but the truth must be told. My friend Goth is unhappily liable to periodical fits of lunacy.

Sir P. Eh?

Mary. Gracious!

Har. I thought so,

Fan. It was to be hoped he would have escaped whilst here, but on meeting him just now he show'd evident symptoms.

Sir P. Dear me, hadn't he better be confined?

Fan. Oh no, he is quite harmless—but singular enough during these fits, he invariably proposes marriage to every one he meets—he proposed to *me* just now.

Sir P. This won't do, I must get him to town—I hate mad people—I remember an aunt of mine, whose cousin's second wife's brother's son, by a former marriage was—

Har. Oh, gracious! There's poor Mr. Goth with a great flower pot on his head.

Mary. Let us run away, perhaps he'll bite.

Fan. Don't be alarmed ladies—I will remain.

Har. Oh! Pray do.

Mary. Dear me, how wild he looks

Sir P. He's turned his coat—this is very unpleasant.

Re-enter, l. E. R. Goth, with his coat turned—his trousers turned up. with a Flower-pot on his head, he dances wildly in.

Goth. (aside to Fan.) Do I look mad enough?

Fan (R. to him) Quite! (*aloud*) Why Mr. Goth, you have turned your coat!

Goth. (R. c.) I have my lord—it rained so hard—I thought it would get dusty—this is paradise—isn't it—or the Botanical Gardens?

Sir. P. He's very mad indeed.

Mary. (L) Shocking.

Goth. (to Fan, pointing to Sir P. and ladies.) I say who are those three lovely women—I wish you'd introduce me to the stout one, what an elegant creature? (*approaches*

Sir P. who hangs back) Madam allow me to apologize—but are you for a Polka? (*dances Sir P. over to R. H.*)

Sir P. Not at present, thank you sir.

Goth. You're a lovely woman, but why wear tights and aisers?

Fan (L. c.) Come Mr. Goth, remember where you are

you know me?

Goth. (R. C.) Oh, yes! You're a baked potatoe man—such being the case, I should like a few stewed boot jacks.

Mary. I'm sure you had better call the servants and have him taken to bed.

Goth. To your's—make no apology—I go.

Har. Do—Sir Peter.—I am so terrified.

Fan. I'll see what I can do, here Mr. Goth. (*takes him aside.*) Most admirable! Propose to the old man!

Goth. (*aside to Fan.*) All right. (*aloud.*) Pooh! I'm a sky-rocket, hold my hat. (*puts flower-pot on Sir Peter's head.*) Beautiful *Jemima!* A word with you!

Sir P. With me sir?

Goth. With you, or the Lady Mayoress—I don't care which! A word in private here! (*beckoning him.*)

Mary. Pray be careful sir!

Fan. There is no fear Miss. (*Har. and Fan. talk apart as Sir P. approaches Goth.*)

Sir P. Pray be quick sir—I'm rather in a hurry!

Goth. (*half whispering*) Allow me to apologize for the liberty—but I must inform you that you are an angel!

Sir P. Dear me sir—yes—

Goth. Are you engaged—beautiful *Susannah!*

Sir P. Engaged! Not that I know of Sir.

Goth. No more am I—You are the fairest of your sex—I am the fairest of both sexes—say *lively Sarah* will you be mine?

Sir P. Dear me, I'll think about it. (*runs over to ladies L.*) he is very mad, he wants to marry me now.

Fan. (C. to *Goth.*) Be a little more violent.

Sir P. (to *Fan.*) Can nothing be done with him?

Fan. I think I see some mischief in his eyes—if he gets violent he must be tied up.

Goth. I should uncommonly like to murder somebody.
(*Sir P. retreats rapidly*)

Har. Oh, mercy!

Mary. Pray let us go!

Gr P. Upon my word this is getting very alarming.

Moth. I'm quite ready to apologize, but I must murder somebody.

Fan. You had better retire ladies, I have no doubt he means it.

Mary. Oh, pray come along! (*Mary and Har. run off, as Sir P. is following, Goth seizes him.*)

Sir P. Help! Murder! Fire!

Goth. Why warble so sweetly?

Fan. Pray let go. Mr. Goth, (*Goth releases Sir P. who runs off.*) Ha! Ha! Ha!

Goth. (L.) Well, Mr. Blinkins.

Fan. Jenkins!

Goth. Allow me to apologize! I think that was done pretty artistically, eh!

Fan. To perfection—confess I've stood your friend.

Goth. You have my dear Hopkins.

Fan. Jenkins!

Goth. Allow me to——

Fan. Well sir, in return I must remind you of your promise to grant me a favour, I have long loved your ward, Miss Fairlove—I'm wealthy &c. will you give your consent to our marriage?

Goth. Hem! Your name isn't Seymour is it Mr.——

Fan. Ha! That rascal! My rival! Oh! That he were here! I'd——

Goth. Mr., dear Tomkins—I hate him as much as you do, and to be revenged on him—satisfy me as to your position and she is your's.

Fan. A thousand thanks! (*shaking him by the hand,*)

Re-enter Sir P. with servants. 2. E. L.

Sir P. Now—cautiously—sieze him—gag him—bind him! (*servants lay hold of Goth.*)

Goth. Gag!—Bind me!—Oh! That be dam—allow me to apologize—but—I'd rather not.

Sir P. Hold him fast!

Goth. Come, I say, old boy—I'm not mad—ask your little friend Hoskins there!

Enter Har. and Mary. 2. E' L.

Sir P. (L.) Your friend you mean!

Goth. (R.) No, he's your friend!

Har. (L.) Indeed! Sir Peter, this gentleman is a friend of mine, he is Mr. Goliath Goth. and who this extraordinary lunatic is I don't know.

Sir P. Eh!

Goth. Holloa—I say—dam—accept my apology—but do you mean to say I am not myself—I am the genuine great Goliath—and I defy competition! (*breaks away from servants who run off L. R. H.*)

Har. Indeed Sir Peter, this gentleman will tell you that he is Mr. Goth. and that under that name—I own—won my heart and has it.

Goth. I say Firkin—you just asked me for my ward, you may have her, but I don't give up my Harriette!

Har. What! Oh! Faithless Goliath! (*to Fan.*)

Goth. Now then, Miss——

Har. I didn't speak to you—Oh! Goliath! Is this so.

Fan. (*crosses to C.*) Indeed I love you very dearly—and I love Miss Fairlove too equally.

Sir P. What the devil is all this! How many Goliath's are there here? Have *two* Goths dared to propose to my wards.

Mary. Oh! Sir, one you know was going mad at the time.

Goth. Miss, I was never mad at all.

Sir P. I'll have satisfaction of both you rascals—If I don't—

Enter Seymour, C. L.

Goth. (R.) Oh! very well—come on!

Seymour. (C.) Hilloa! What's all this?

Har. (L.) Charles!

Sir P. (L. C.) Ah! Charles, you're just in time to avenge two insults past on your sister—by these Goths here!

Har. Only by one dear Charles.

Sey. They shall answer me—Mr. Goth—I have long been a suitor for your ward's hand—I now demand of you—

Goth. Allow me to apologize for the observation—but I'll see you further first.

Sey. Very well, sir, I have heard from my sister's maid of your double insult—and shall have satisfaction—but first where is Miss Fairlove, sir,—I have searched for her everywhere, and cannot find her?

Goth. How can I tell? Ask that Gentleman. (*pointing to Fan.*) perhaps he knows—as he's going to marry her!

Sey. What!

Fan. (R. C.) You have heard—Captain Seymour.

Har. (L.) Oh! Perfidious Goliath!

Goth. (R.) Now Miss!

Sey. And what pretensions dare you to advance to Miss Fairlove, Sir?

Fan. None in particular sir, except she is devotedly attached to me—do you know this ring sir, a recent gift of her's?

Sey. By heavens! The one I gave her not a week since, now may I—

Har. Oh! Charles—This ungrateful man, by swearing eternal devotion to me—won, and has now my whole heart,

Sey. Two insults to my sister! If I do not blow out the brains of these two men, let me—where sir is Miss Fairlove!

Fan. Where sir, should a woman be, but under the pro-

tection of the man who loves her—she is safe under mine
Sey. Not another word sir—follow me—(*goes up c.*)

Sir P. Come—I'm not going to be out of this—come—
 —we'll all four go! (*goes up*)

Mary. Oh! Sir Peter! You shall not go! (*stopping him*)

Har. Nor you Charles. (*crosses to c*) Oh! sir, (*to Fan.*) For my sake do not you go.

Fan. (*aside*) I shall not for my own.

Goth. (*R*) Well, is any one going to prevent me, because let them make haste.

Sey. No one shall stop us—come on!

Fan. (*c*) Stop! I command you—I will stay you all.

Sey. You!

Sir P. Hoity! Toity! What next I wonder?

Fan. Silence! I shall restrain you all in one moment—
 Miss Seymour, I dearly love Miss Fairlove, but shall not marry her—and if I take any woman to wife, It shall be yourself. Captain Seymour, if I do not marry Miss Fairlove, you shall. Mr! Goth, I will get rid of your dilemma and leave you unburdened with a wife you would not know know what to do with—and all this by—simply—removing my hat!

Takes off hat, her curls fall over her shoulders.

Sir P. Heyday!

Mary. A woman!

Har. (*aside*) What a provoking shame!

Sey. Miss Fairlove!

**Goth.* My abandoned ward in breech—I beg to apologize—

Fan. Be quiet sir—Miss Seymour! I have a thousand apologies to make to you, bye and bye you shall hear all—
 Captain Seymour! with my guardian's consent—which he cannot refuse, I am your's!

Sey. Mr. Goth, may I ask it?

Sir P. Certainly, Mr, Goth, my ward's a noble young fellow you shall give it!

Goth. Come—I'll give you my ward for your sister.

Sey. Done, if Harriette will consent.

Sir P. But if not Goth. try the other.

Goth. (*crosses to c.*) Dear Miss Harriette, you hear what your brother says, will you be mine?

Har. Why sir—as I hear you have rather an aversion to me than otherwise, I must beg to apologize and decline. (*retires up*)

Goth. (*aside*) That's a settler [*crosses to L*] [*aloud*] Miss Mary you heard what your guardian said will you be mine?

Mary. Why sir—as I heard I am the first woman who ever inspired you with an antipathy, you must accept my apology and refusal. (*cross to L.*)

Goth. Captain Seymour—I'll trouble you for my ward again if you have no objection.

Sey. I have a very decided objection. Mr. Goth—but come—you'll spend a month with us here, and I dare say will prevail upon Harriette to change her mind. Mary I am inclined to believe is otherwise engaged,

Sir P. All 'll be right I'll be bound—as my great grandmother's third cousin's wife's—there! There! I'm a man of few words.

Goth. Thank you, I wish you were a man of few relations. I suppose I must console myself and wait—but, after suffering so much and to so little purpose, perhaps you, [*coming forward*] will lend me a helping hand out of my troubles—and if my proceedings have been the source of any weariness or discomfort to you, why, allow me very humbly to apologize!

Seymour, Fanny, Goth, Harriette, Sir Peter, Mary,

R,

CURTAIN,

L.

Wooler
A

FAINT HEART

WHICH *DID* WIN A FAIR LADY,

A Comedy,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Orange Blossoms; Keep Your Temper; Old Phil's Birthday; Model Husband;
Language of Flowers; Allow me to Apologize; A Twice-told Tale,
Founded on Facts; Law of the Lips; Sisterly Service; Did I
Dream it? Silver Wedding; &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND, LONDON.

A FAINT HEART.

*First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre,
(Under the Management of Mr. Swanborough, Sen.),
On Monday, 9th February, 1863.*

Characters.

ERASMUS VAN KIEL (*a Professor*)..... Mr. RAY.

CONRAD BERNSTORFF } (*his Pupils*) { Mr. BELFORD.
PETER TEN BROECK } { Mr. PARSELLE.

ROSA VAN DER LINDEN..... Miss E. BUFTON.

Scene.—DORDRECHT. Period 1670.

Costumes.

ERASMUS.—Black doublet, trunks, and cloak, cap, grey hose, black shoes and buckles.

CONRAD.—Drab doublet and trunks, trimmed with blue, orange colour hose, black shoes, rosettes and buckles, drab hat with blue ribbon.

PETER.—Green doublet and trunks trimmed with scarlet, scarlet hose, black shoes, rosettes and buckles, black hat and scarlet ribbon.

ROSA.—Pink silk, trimmed with black velvet,. 2nd dress—doublet and trunks, light hose, black shoes, &c.

A

FAINT HEART WHICH *DID* WIN A FAIR LADY.



SCENE.— *Garden of Erasmus Van Kiel's House, portico and entrance, R. practicable window; a wall, L., with practicable door, garden seats.*

Enter ERASMUS, from house, R. 2 E.

ERASMUS. I must, perforce, speak to neighbour Van der Linden; the subject is delicate, and Van der Linden is irascible; but, by the bones of St. Nicholas, under this provocation I must do violence to my delicacy and brave his anger. Let me be sure of my statement—Happening to turn my eyes from the pages of the divine Plato across my neighbour's bed of tulips, I remarked something glancing whitely in the sunlight, some evil spirit chained my eyes to the object, when to my horror and consternation, I discovered that I was absolutely staring at the shoulders of the maiden, Rosa Van der Linden, she was there in the sunlight without a mantle on her shoulders, and they were white as snow; whether that be the ordinary colour of maidens' shoulders I cannot testify, my experience being limited; but whatever the colour, snow white, sea green, or sky blue, to display them under the windows of a University Professor who is reading Plato, and of two young men who are struggling with the Nicomachean Ethics, is so flagrant and preposterous an enormity as to call for instant rebuke and reprehension—of course at that moment Conrad Bernstorff's pen wanted mending and he must adjourn to the window for more light, the result of which was that the good quill, with which I could have written a folio volume and left it a pen still, was reduced to an inch of feather; but it must be seen to. (*calls at door, R.*) Peter Ten Broeck.

Enter PETER from house, R.

PETER. Sir, did you want me?

ERAS. Yes, Peter, I am constrained to leave our academic bower on business of moment.

PETER. (*aside*) A business of a good many moments, I hope.

ERAS. My enforced and untoward absence, however, need not furnish you with occasion to intermit your studies; but, inasmuch as Phœbus is staring somewhat rudely into the chamber above, peradventure it were as well you brought your books down into the cool shade of the garden here. (*aside*) I am not inclined to think that the white shoulders of a marriageable maiden will furnish a consistent commentary on the morals of Nichomachus.

PETER. Yes, sir; but isn't this the day you expect the new pupil, our burgomaster's nephew?

ERAS. It is, Peter, and should the youth arrive pending my temporary absence, I commend him to your discretion. I would say to Conrad's and yours, but that Conrad has no discretion to commend him to.

PETER. I'll take excellent care of him, sir.

ERAS. I trust so. I am bound to the burgomasters at the Town Hall, and on my return shall call upon Van Voorst, touching the Plautus he picked up at Leyden, and which the obstinate old fool cannot see he should surrender to me. What an impenetrable blockhead like him can want with an *Edito Princeps* is a problem that Euclid himself could not solve, but time presses. *Vale mi puer! vale.* *Exit, L. 1 E.*

PETER. Bane vale, domine, and receive my warmest thanks for going. If he's going to old Van Voorst's he won't afflict us with his company again till midnight. I wonder if Rosa has received the tulip roots I ordered for her from Haarlem; what an impudent dog I must be to send tulip roots to a burgomaster's daughter, and such a bewitching bewildering daughter! If she should know it, if anybody should know it, what would become of me? And I'm a bit of a traitor too; what business have I to love her, even in secret, when I know that Conrad loves her, and she loves him? but I can't help it and I keep it all to myself, so I can't do anybody any harm, and I'm sure I help Conrad on in his wooing all I can, much more than he chooses to help himself. *CONRAD appears at window, R.*

CONRAD. Now, Peter, are you coming to help me out of this ethical mire? I'm stuck fast.

PETER. Van Kiel's gone to the Town Hall, and he said we were to bring our books down here.

CONRAD. Oh, did he? very good. Here come the books first, then I follow. (*throws books out and disappears*)

PETER. That's just like him, I wonder he didn't jump out of window too.

Enter CONRAD from house, R.

CONRAD. Where's old Bustlewig gone to, did you say?

PETER. To the Town Hall and to Dr. Van Voorst's.

CONRAD. Evoe! then we've the day before us and I mean to make some use of it, I promise you.

PETER. I'm glad to hear it, for the novelty of the thing.

CONRAD. None of your nonsense. Yes, I mean to-day to bring matters to a close between Rosa and myself.

PETER. (*sighing*) Oh!

CONRAD. What are you sighing about?

PETER. I! I was not sighing. Well, perhaps it was because I felt I should never bring matters to a close with such a girl.

CONRAD. All in good time, my dear Peter, but you don't go in for those things, there isn't half devil enough in you; why you knew Rosa before I did, why didn't you try your luck yourself?

PETER. (*aside*) Why didn't I? (*aloud*) No, no, Conrad, I know I'm an impudent dog, but I don't think I could stretch my impudence to that. Rosa and I are very good friends, I couldn't afford to risk offending her.

CONRAD. Ha, ha! my word, you'd have some trouble to offend a pretty woman by telling her you loved her! but never mind, your turn will come some day, you've got too much money to be allowed to escape, and if you won't make love to a girl, you'll find one who'll take the trouble off your hands, and make love to you.

PETER. Go along with you! I should hate a woman who could be unwomanly enough to make love to me.

CONRAD. Oh no! you wouldn't: it's much more pleasant than you think for; but, Peter, I've something to say to you, although I don't suppose you can help me out of the fog I'm enveloped in; the fact is, I am the subject of a most mysterious providence.

PETER. So much the better for you.

CONRAD. Considerably. You know, Peter, I am by no means rich, and to carry on my suit to Rosa successfully, it was necessary that I should make such an appearance as would warrant the attempt. Some good fairy assists me—now, I receive a sum of money: now, a packet of perfumes and jewellery, and this very morning, as if the beneficent unknown was aware that I hadn't a suitable dress for the burgomaster's ball to-night, comes a fine violet velvet suit flowered with silver—there must be fairies.

PETER. (*aside*) I'm a pretty sort of a fairy, certainly.

CONRAD. And what is more extraordinary still, if Rosa expresses admiration of, or desire for anything, that very thing is sure to be delivered at her door shortly afterwards; she naturally enough attributes the attention to me, and as it is

plainly done on my account, I have no right or reason to repudiate it.

PETER. No, Conrad; but if you had led a more regular life, you would not have wanted all this assistance from the fairies.

CONRAD. Psha! my life has been regular enough.

PETER. Yes, regularly irregular! where are all the good ducats you have drowned in the wine shops, melted in that devil's furnace the gaming house, and bartered for the light smiles of the false girls of Haarlem?

CONRAD. Oh, if you're going to preach——

PETER. I'm *not* going to preach; but I *do* hope you will make Rosa a good husband.

CONRAD. Oh! as husbands go, I dare say I shall.

PETER. But do you really love her, Conrad?

CONRAD. Love her! Show me the imbecile who doesn't love a pretty girl, and a handsome fortune.

PETER. I have my fears, that your affections are fixed more upon her fortune than herself.

CONRAD. Say equally divided, and you are perhaps right.

PETER. Well, well, it's no business of mine! (*aside*) If she loves him, what have I to do with, or what right have I to interfere?

CONRAD. But we're wasting time! Rosa promised to pay us a visit here.

PETER. Nonsense!

CONRAD. Fact! I vowed I'd climb over into her garden, if she didn't! so she consented, saying, "She would rather come here, as she should feel safe, if her friend Peter were present"

PETER. No, did she say that though?

CONRAD. Yes. Now, you know that door communicates with her garden, but old Van der Linden keeps the key. "I'll get another key," said I; "You can't," said she; "Will you use it, if I do?" said I; "Try me," said she; "I will," said I. And here *is* the key. I've just seen her in the garden, so I'll go. and throw it over to her.

PETER. I don't think she will use it.

CONRAD. I'm sure she will! and you can manage to have some special appointment, you know, and leave us together.

PETER. No, I'll be hanged if I do!

CONRAD. What?

PETER. Didn't you say, she bargained for my being present?

CONRAD. Pooh! she didn't mean it.

PETER. She said it! We've no right to question her meaning. I, for one, shall pay respect to what she said.

CONRAD. Ha, ha! she'll invent a mode of getting rid of you.

PETER. She needn't trouble to invent anything, if she says go, I'll be off in a moment.

CONRAD. Good! I must go, and make myself a little smarter—if she should come whilst I am away, you can amuse her.

PETER. No—no, don't throw the key till you're ready.

CONRAD. Nonsense! you're surely not afraid of being left alone with a pretty girl for a few minutes?

PETER. Afraid? Ha! ha! that's good, are *you* not afraid to leave her alone with such an impudent dog as I am?

CONRAD. I'll answer that practically by leaving the field open to you for the next ten minutes. I shall throw the key to her at once. (*throws key over wall, L., and exit into house, R.*)

PETER. I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself; but Conrad is right, I *am* afraid of being left alone with her—her voice confuses me, her eyes bewilder me, and when she touches me I feel as if I should faint. If I could only look at her without her seeing me, a summer's day would be too short for the purpose, and I can enjoy her company when I please, thanks to this dear portrait, (*takes out portrait*) which, like an impudent dog as I am, I had done without her knowledge, she little thought as she sat so calmly and innocently at the theatre the other day that I, like a scoundrel, was abetting another scoundrel in taking a felonious copy of her dear face.

Enter ROSA, door in wall, L., unseen by him.

Ah, you darling! (*to portrait*) I feel quite at my ease with *you*. I can tell you that you are beautiful as a dream, I can say that I love you to distraction, and you won't frown at me, those sweet eyes will look as kindly as before.

ROSA. Why, Peter, what are you talking to?

PETER. (*confused, hiding portrait*) Eh? oh, Miss Rosa! yes, quite well, thank you. (*aside*) Good gracious! if she saw—if she heard.

ROSA. Oh, you sly creature, I've caught you, have I? I know it was the portrait of some girl you were going into raptures over.

PETER. Miss Rosa, can you imagine——

ROSA. Oh, I'm sure of it. Now, Peter, do let me have one peep at her.

PETER. (*aside*) What on earth will become of me? (*aloud*) Indeed, Miss Rosa.

ROSA. I know I'm only a girl, Peter; but indeed—indeed I can keep a secret. Now do, only one peep.

PETER. No, but, Miss Rosa, upon my word it's only an ugly thing. No, no, I don't mean that, not ugly, but——

ROSA. Now for shame, Peter, you who have always professed so much regard for me, to refuse me such a trifle. Very well, sir, I shall not forget it. (*offended*)

PETER. Oh, don't talk in that way, and call me sir.

ROSA. Then let me see it at once, you provoking thing?

PETER. (*aside*) It's all over with me. (*aloud*) But really, Miss Rosa, it's only a portrait of my grandmother.

ROSA. The dear old darling! now I must and will see her likeness.

PETER. It's all covered with dust now, I'll clean it, and you shall see it to-morrow.

ROSA. Oh, you tiresome unkind creature! I won't ask you any more, if I had asked Conrad to oblige me——

PETER. (*aside*) I can't stand it any longer. (*aloud, giving portrait*) There it is, Miss Rosa. (*aside*) If I could only run away now, but my legs tremble so.

ROSA. (*recognizing the likeness*) Peter!!!

PETER. (*aside*) There's only one way out of it. (*aloud*) Ha, ha, ha! you *would* look at it.

ROSA. Why how on earth came you by my portrait, Peter?

PETER. Gracious! you surely don't think it's mine; but you mustn't betray me, it's Conrad's, he had it done secretly, and would never forgive me, if he knew I had shewn it to you.

ROSA. (*aside*) I have some grave suspicions here, but I'll be patient, and wait till time confirms or destroys them. (*aloud*) Dear Conrad, this secret and delicate devotion moves me more than all his uttered raptures. How he must love me. (PETER *groans*) Bless me, Peter, what are you groaning in that way for?

PETER. Eh? I'm sure I beg your pardon, it's very rude, but you see I have betrayed my friend's confidence, and I am uneasy.

ROSA. Be very easy, Peter, give him back the portrait.

Enter CONRAD from house, R., he goes round to L.

It is sufficient that I know of Conrad's devotion, I can reward it, without his suspecting me of the knowledge.

CONRAD. (*aside*) Oh! more fairy work I suppose?

PETER. Of course you can.

ROSA. But where is Conrad?

CONRAD. (*L., kissing her neck*) Here, dear Rosa!

ROSA. (*C.*) For shame, sir! I have told you a hundred times that I will not suffer those liberties.

PETER. (*R., aside*) Then he must have kissed her a hundred times. (*groans*)

ROSA. I'm sure something's the matter with Peter, he's been making the most extraordinary noises.

CONRAD. Yes, he's been very poorly all the morning, I think you'd better go and lie down for an hour, Peter.

ROSA. I oppose that; if Peter goes, I go.

PETER. Don't be alarmed, Miss Rosa, Peter's not going.

ROSA. Oh, Conrad, I have to thank you for the magnificent tulip roots you sent me.

CONRAD. Eh? Oh pray don't mention it. (*aside*) Fairies again!

ROSA. I'm sure I don't know what I can give you in return for all your fine presents.

CONRAD. (*in a low tone*) You know, Rosa, what I would have in return.

ROSA. Oh, no whispering, it's shocking manners, besides you tickle my ear.

CONRAD. You surely wouldn't have me make love to you before a third person, although it is only Peter.

ROSA. Surely not, I came here to be amused, and I don't want to be made love to at all.

CONRAD. Doesn't being made love to amuse you?

ROSA. Amuse me! as if I didn't know the whole worn out process by heart, "Oh, Rosa, how pretty you are." As if Rosa didn't know that. "Oh, Rosa, how I love you." As if Rosa had never heard that before, and "Oh, Rosa, when shall we be married?" in much about the same tone as you would say "Oh, Rosa, when shall we be hanged?" No thank you, Conrad. By the way, don't you expect my cousin Karl here to-day?

CONRAD. Yes, what's he like?

ROSA. He is said to be very like me.

PETER. Dear me! then he must be much too pretty for a boy.

ROSA. Thank you, Peter. Now *you* ought to have said that, Conrad; but Karl will, of course come to us first, and as he will stay for the ball to-night, will not probably be with you till to-morrow. Mind you come early, and, Peter, I'll promise to secure a pretty partner for you.

PETER. Thank you, Miss Rosa, but if you will let me dance with you once, I shall be quite content.

ROSA. That you shall, Peter, the very first dance, too.

CONRAD. No, no, *I* claim the first.

ROSA. You should have *asked* first then; my hand is pledged to Peter.

CONRAD. Peter and I shall quarrel if he accepts it.

ROSA. Indeed, sir, do you question my right to dance the first, second, third, twentieth or last dance with whom I please?

CONRAD. Yes, I do.

PETER. Never mind, Miss Rosa; I hate quarrelling, especially with a fellow student, and although I know I'm an impudent dog, I should never have ventured to ask your hand for the first dance; but if you offer it, I shall take it at the risk of quarrelling to the end of my life.

ROSA. (*aside*) I more than suspect now. (*aloud*) There shall

be no quarrelling, Peter, I—oh, mercy on us! surely here is your precious preceptor coming down the street! (*looking L. 1 E.*)

CONRAD. By Jupiter, yes—and you here!

ROSA. (*runs to door, L.*) Quick, let me go—ha! the door has blown too and the key's on the other side. What's to be done? if he finds me here——

CONRAD. We shall get into a pretty scrape.

PETER. Oh, never mind ourselves—how can we get Rosa away?

ROSA. Thank you, Peter. I have it, get me a cloak, quick. (*PETER runs into house, R.*) Conrad, you make Peter do all the work.

CONRAD. Let him, he gets all the thanks.

Re-enter PETER, R., with cloak.

PETER. Here's a cloak, Miss Rosa.

ROSA. (*puts it on*) That's it—Now your cap, Conrad. (*takes it off and puts it on*)

CONRAD. But I say——

ROSA. It's smarter than Peter's. Now mind, I'm Karl, the new pupil. Just in time.

Enter ERASMUS, L. 1 E.

ERAS. I have returned earlier than—eh? who is this?

ROSA. Oh, I? I'm the new pupil and I know you're the old professor because you've got on a shabby coat and wear spectacles. How d'ye do?

ERAS. Upon my word, this——

ROSA. Never mind, I dare say you're as well as usual; I'm flourishing, thank you. I only just stepped round to announce myself, I'm going to my uncle's now to change my dress. (*crosses, L.*) Good bye, you fellows, for the present. Ta ta! professor, keep up your spirits, I shall be back presently. (*aside*) A wild idea has entered my head, and come what may I'll carry it out. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

CONRAD. (*aside to PETER*) Bravo—well done!

PETER. I couldn't have believed it.

ERAS. My breath has been suspended; I shall have to expel that young gentleman in twenty-four hours—call a coat shabby I have not yet worn four years, and say, “ta ta!” to a senior professor of Greek!

CONRAD. He's rather wild, sir—we must tame him.

PETER. He's very young, sir—we must forgive him.

ERAS. He comes of an ill-conditioned race; why, just now when I accosted the burgomaster, his uncle, he bade me betake myself to Tartarus or Acheron, but as he made use of our vernacular tongue, his language was more forcible, though

perhaps less elegant—but let us dismiss all this. I have returned for my notes on Æsop, in order to prove to that miserable Van Voorst that there never was such a person, and that the fables were written by Socrates. *Exit into house, R.*

CONRAD. I say, Mr. Ten Broeck, I by no means approve of your sneaking, favour-currying ways with Miss Van der Linden; your pretended respect——

PETER. I *pretend* no respect for her.

CONRAD. Well, I don't allow it; you will please to remember that she is *my* property.

PETER. For goodness' sake, man, speak of a lady with more delicacy—*your* property! as if she were your horse or your dog!

CONRAD. You will suffer me to choose my own language, if you please. Remember, if you do dance the first dance with her——

PETER. For shame! if by the wildest stretch of probability she could ever have loved me, do you think I should care whom she danced with? but mind, you won't frighten me out of it, and if you mean quarrelling, say so at once, for I shall do it.

CONRAD. At your peril!

PETER. Oh, stuff! and if you intend fighting let us fight at once, then, perhaps, one of us won't go to the ball at all.

CONRAD. No, we'll put it off till the morning; I've no idea of losing a night's pleasure for the sake of pinking you, or being pinked myself.

PETER. (*aside*) Good heaven! if I should happen to kill him!—the man she loves—she would hate me for ever! (*aloud*) Conrad, there must be no fighting. I beg your pardon. I will not dance with her at all.

CONRAD. Oh! if you come round handsomely in that way, you won't find me hang back. I was a little piqued, that's all. Your hand! You *shall* dance with her.

PETER. No, no!

CONRAD. But I say you shall, and the first dance too!

Re-enter ERASMUS from house, R., with manuscript.

ERAS. Now to expose, confound, and annihilate, that wretched impostor Van Voorst! The time of my return, gentlemen, is uncertain, and if that youthful impertinence reappears, impress upon him that it is not consistent with the dignity of a Greek professor, to be taken leave of with the expression, "ta, ta!" *Exit, L. 1 E.*

CONRAD. Certainly, sir! Now, Peter, as old Van Kiel won't be back yet awhile, and as I have had Greek enough for one day, I shall go, and talk a little sensible Dutch to Fanchette, at the Silver Cross.

PETER. I pity your taste, after talking with Rosa.

CONRAD. Psha! if Fanchette's father were only a burgo-master, now—but there, he isn't, so never mind. Lend me your cap, Peter! (*takes it*) Thank you! I shall be back when I'm tired of Fanchette, *Exit, L. 1 E.*

PETER. Now *is* that fellow worthy of Rosa? To compare a common wench, at a common wine shop with her. Oh, if I were only in his place—and I had the first chance too—but with all my impudence, I should never have dared to tell her I loved her, and if I had, I should only have got my ears boxed for my pains.

Enter ROSA, door in wall, L., dressed in a boy's suit—she wears a slight moustache.

ROSA. Mynheer Van Kiel, if you please?

PETER. (*aside*) The real Karl himself! (*aloud*) Not here. You're the new pupil, Karl Van der Linden?

ROSA. Yes, and you are Conrad Bernstorff?

PETER. No, I'm not—I wish I was!

ROSA. Peter Ten Broeck, then?

PETER. Yes.

ROSA. And pray, why can't you be satisfied with being yourself? What do you want to be somebody else for? Is Conrad Bernstorff better looking?

PETER. Well, perhaps not much.

ROSA. Better off?

PETER. Well, no.

ROSA. Better behaved?

PETER. No, I may say, certainly not.

ROSA. Then what the plague do you mean by saying, you wish you were Conrad Bernstorff? Got any tobacco?

PETER. Tobacco! in the professor's garden?

ROSA. Yes, tobacco in the professor's library—tobacco in the professor's bed-room—tobacco in the professor's face, if he's saucy.

PETER. I'm amazed! but there's none here.

ROSA. So much the worse—any wine?

PETER. At dinner time—not before.

ROSA. Diavolo! what a confounded place! but tell me now—for I see you and I are to be fast friends, so there must be no secrets between us—why do you envy Conrad Bernstorff?

PETER. Why, because he's engaged to the dearest girl in Dordrecht.

ROSA. Indeed! and who is this enviable young lady?

PETER. Your cousin Rosa.

ROSA. Oh, nonsense! I'm in love with her myself.

PETER. (*grasping her hand*) No, are you? my dear fellow—I mean, you wretched boy, I pity you!

ROSA. Me? why?

PETER. Because Conrad's going to bring matters to a close with her to-night, at the burgomaster's ball.

ROSA. Oh, is he?

PETER. Yes, so what's the use of your being in love with her? But I say, I like you, and I'll tell you a profound secret, if you'll give me your faithful word of honour not to betray me.

ROSA. I give it, not a soul but myself shall know it.

PETER. Above all, not Rosa; or I should go and drown myself in the canal at once.

ROSA. No one but myself, I swear it.

PETER. Very good; then—just turn your head away a little, will you? it's no consequence, only your eyes are so like her's they quite confuse me—well, then, I'm in love with her myself.

ROSA. You! (*aside*) I half suspected as much.

PETER. Desperately!—madly! But what's the use?—she don't know it, and never will.

ROSA. But why in the name of patience, haven't you told her?

PETER. What! I tell Rosa Van der Linden, that I love her!—why, she'd never speak to me again. But I've done some of the most impudent things to her.

ROSA. (*gravely*) I'm sorry to hear it.

PETER. Oh, but she don't know them, bless you! First of all, I've got her portrait taken on the sly—wasn't that impudent?

ROSA. You!

PETER. Yes, who else d'ye think would have done it? Then, I sent for a rose-coloured mantle for her from Paris.

ROSA. You!

PETER. Yes, and then, I got her a horse, and a dog from England!

ROSA. You!

PETER. Yes, impudent enough, eh? Then, I sent her some tulip roots from Haarlem, and a lot of other trifles. What are you staring at me in that way for?

ROSA. Why, my cousin told me of these presents, but she said Conrad had sent them.

PETER. Well, she thinks so, and as she loves him, why not let her think so? It's reward enough for me to gratify her.

ROSA. (*aside*) Who would believe this? Is this creature a man, and afraid to tell a girl he loves her, or, did he want me to make love to him? (*aloud*) Why, Peter, what a poor faint-hearted, good-natured, modest simpleton you are.

PETER. I modest! Why, I'm the most impudent dog alive,

ROSA. Ha, ha! pretty impudence yours! That's not my way! If a girl takes my fancy, I say to her at once, "My dear creature, I like you, do you like me?—if so, say so, and I'm for you—if not, say so all the same, and I'm for somebody else!"

PETER. No, do you though?

ROSA. And if there's a rival in the case, I say to him, "Sir, a certain lady has complained to me, of your offensive familiarity." He blusters of course, so do I; I cock my hat and twirl my moustache, and say to him, "If ever I find you again infecting the air that lady breathes, I'll crop your ears, sir!" And when I next find him in her presence, I crop his ears accordingly, and so effectually get rid of him; for, of course, he can't appear before a lady without his ears.

PETER. (*aside*) What a young Turk! And how does he manage to twirl those moustaches?

ROSA. That's the mode we men of the world adopt, what you obscure students do, is another matter; but I should have thought, that even a student had courage enough to tell a lady he loved her.

PETER. He might if he thought he was worthy of the lady.

ROSA. (*aside*) The modesty of this man, is something alarming! I was certainly never loved in this manner before.

CONRAD. (*sings, without*)

"One kiss for your cheek, dear, and one for your brow,
And a gay gold ring—but not just now!"

PETER. Here comes Conrad. (*aside*) And I'm half afraid he's been drinking.

Enter CONRAD, L. 1 E., *exhilarated*.

CONRAD. Now, Peter, I want you to lend—hillock!

PETER. Our new fellow student, Conrad.

CONRAD. Oh! Well, my fine fellow, and how long have you left the nursery?

ROSA. Long enough to teach you manners, if you require a lesson.

CONRAD. Well crowed, bantam! ha, ha!

ROSA. Well brayed, Neddy!

CONRAD. Why, confound—

PETER. Hush, Conrad, remember he's Rosa's cousin.

CONRAD. So he is; besides, I'm in too good a humour to quarrel. Let us be friends, youngster.

ROSA. As you please—kissing or cuffing—all's one to me.

PETER. Karl will be a rare companion for you, Conrad, he has been asking for wine and tobacco already.

CONRAD. Has he? I honour you, Karl. I've just crushed two flasks of double Burgundy, and we'll go, and have a third.

ROSA. But if the professor—

CONRAD. Hang, burn, impale the professor! Come along, and I'll introduce you to Fanchette, the prettiest—

PETER. (*aside to him*) Hush! don't make a fool of yourself, talking of Fanchette, he'll tell Rosa.

CONRAD. (*aside*) He'll tell Rosa? Pshaw! you're not such a milksop as to go and tell tales, Karl, are you?

ROSA. Not I! I promise you Rosa shall know nothing but what you tell her yourself.

CONRAD. That's a Spartan! I promise you a kiss from Fanchette's red lips for that.

ROSA. Thank you, I'm not to be bribed; besides, I should prefer one from Rosa.

CONRAD. What? you! What the devil have you to do with Rosa?

ROSA. I'm very fond of her, that's all.

CONRAD. You dare not say that again.

ROSA. Why should I? I've said it once, I'll say something else now. She's very fond of me.

CONRAD. Confound you—you will have a quarrel then?

ROSA. If it will afford you the slightest pleasure I will. What the plague, sir, do you mean by pretending to my cousin Rosa, whilst you are amusing yourself with somebody else's cousin, Fanchette? It touches the honour of our family, sir, I am the representative of the family, for the burgomaster is several years too old, and many degrees too stout to be entrusted with the charge; therefore I call upon you, sir, to abandon Fanchette, or to forget Rosa Van der Linden.

CONRAD. Do you—and what if I refuse?

ROSA. Then, sir, I will fight you with anything from small swords up to poleaxes, from pistols up to light artillery.

CONRAD. Why you little monkey, confound—

ROSA. Oh, don't trouble yourself about my size, nor brag about your own—it takes a good many pounds of rose leaves to make an ounce of otto.

CONRAD. (*taking cane from garden seat*) I think here's a werpon formidable enough to chastise you with.

ROSA. (*aside*) Gracious! he isn't going to hit me? (*aloud*) Conrad, would you draw on an unarmed man?

PETER. (*firmly*) Put that cane down, Conrad.

CONRAD. Eh? what do you mean by that?

PETER. Only this—that I won't stand by and see a cousin of Rosa's struck—if you want to hit anybody, hit me.

ROSA. (*aside*) Thanks, my brave Peter!

CONRAD. I've half a mind to take you at your word.

PETER. Do, only mind, I'm apt to hit again, and I'm as big as you!

CONRAD. (*throwing away cane*) Psha! why should we fall out about this little puppy?

ROSA. Why indeed, Mr. Bulldog? In fact, I was only joking, I don't care for Rosa, only I was obliged to say I'd fight for her for my credit's sake. She's too poverty-stricken for me.

CONRAD. What? She's the richest girl in Dordrecht!

ROSA. Thought to be so. The uncle from whom she expected so much is dead, and has left all his money to me.

CONRAD. Eh!

ROSA. Well, what's the man staring at?—an't I as proper a person to have a fortune left me, as Rosa?

CONRAD. Undoubtedly! Give me your hand, youngster. You know, I couldn't stand being defied by a little devil like you; but between ourselves, I am by no means justified in fighting about Miss Van der Linden.

PETER. Conrad!

ROSA. Why, I thought you were engaged to her?

CONRAD. A mistake, my good lad, quite a mistake. I couldn't afford to bid for the prettiest picture in the world, if it hadn't a gilt frame. (*crosses C.*)

ROSA. What! (*aside*) The wretch! here's an escape!

PETER. Conrad, you don't mean to say, you'll desert Rosa Van der Linden because she's poor?

CONRAD. Very sorry, my dear fellow, but I really must.

PETER. And add to her misfortune, by breaking her heart?

ROSA. (*aside*) Not quite!

PETER. I say, Conrad, don't talk in that way, don't now! You know I have more money than I want—more than I ought to have, in fact; there, I'll make over half—three parts of it to you, only, don't desert that poor dear girl!

ROSA. (*aside*) I could kiss that Peter, that I could.

CONRAD. Thank you, Peter, but I couldn't think of it. Rosa must wear the willow for me.

ROSA. (*aside*) She'll see you hanging on a willow first!

PETER. Then friendship apart, you are the most cold-blooded rascal I ever met with.

CONRAD. Peter!

PETER. Don't call me Peter, sir, how dare you call me Peter? I'll never shake hands with you again.

ROSA. (*aside*) What a spirit Peter has.

CONRAD. Don't get into a fume, man; who'd be fool enough to take the girl without a guilder in her pocket.

PETER. Don't talk to me, sir? Who would? *I* would! Confound you, I loved her long before you saw her, and I'd take her if she came to me tied up in a sack!

CONRAD. Heyday, here's news! you love Rosa?

PETER. (*frightened*) Hush! please don't talk so loud, I didn't know what I was saying, she might overhear us.

ROSA. I really think I must tell my cousin of this scene.

PETER. No no, promise me you won't, (I saved you from a thrashing you know,) there's a good fellow, or I know I shall have to take to the canal.

ROSA. Oh don't do that, Peter. Rosa would never forgive. Mercy on us! here comes the Professor!

CONRAD. Well, what then?

ROSA. I won't see him yet, perhaps he won't let me go out again, and I promised Rosa—see, she gave me the key of this door, so possibly she loves me better than you think for. Good bye, don't quarrel about Rosa, and, Conrad, I advise you to go back to Fanchette as quick as you possibly can.

Exit, door in wall, L.

PETER. Don't look at me, sir!

CONRAD. Upon my soul I can't help it—you love—a hem!

Enter ERASMUS, L. 1 E.

ERAS. Rejoice with me, my alumni, I have crushed and trampled upon that miserable beast Van Voorst! munc est bibendum, we will make a sacrifice unto Bacchus! But where is the youth who said "ta ta" to me?

CONRAD. Gone to smoke a pipe at the Silver Cross, sir.

ERAS. Smoke! pipe! Sil——

PETER. No no, sir, he's gone to see his uncle, the burgomaster.

ERAS. Oh, has he? A-hem! evil communications—no, he has no good manners to corrupt.

Enter ROSA, door in wall, L., in the cloak and hat she wore at her first exit.

CONRAD. (to PETER) Confound it! here's Rosa herself.

PETER. I wonder you're not ashamed to look at her in the face.

ROSA. Well, Professor, I'm back again you see.

ERAS. A-ha! and through that door. (*aside*) If old Van der Linden lends his key I'll have it locked up. (*aloud*) And what have you been doing, sir?

ROSA. I oh, nothing! making love to my cousin Rosa.

ERAS. Love! avoid thee, Satanas! thou most profane, and precocious youth—hath the maiden a mantle on her shoulders?

ROSA. She has indeed, a very ample one.

PETER. (*aside to ROSA*) How could you venture back?

ROSA. (to PETER) This disguise protects me.

ERAS. Peter! (*retires up C. with PETER*)

ROSA. Dear Conrad, I slipped back to beg you to come early this evening, that we may have a long chat before the other tiresome people arrive.

CONRAD. A-hem! I am terribly vexed, Miss Van der Linden; but I am afraid I cannot come at all.

ROSA. "Vexed," "Miss Van der Linden," "not come;" why, what do you mean?

CONRAD. Why, the painful fact is, that an appointment——

ROSA. An appointment that supersedes your engagement to me?

CONRAD. I am miserably mortified—but, you have your cousin Karl to console you?

ROSA. What, you great silly, jealous of that boy, for shame!

CONRAD. Not jealous, but——(*PETER watches them anxiously and tries to get away from ERASMUS*)

ROSA. He has told you of my loss of fortune—yes?

CONRAD. He certainly mentioned——

ROSA. Oh, Conrad! and you no longer love me, because I am poor; can we not be happy without all that horrid money?

CONRAD. Candour compels me to say——

ROSA. Candour, your candour! Say no more; it was Rosa's gold, not Rosa's heart you wanted. (*turns away in grief*)

ERAS. Peter, stop here!

PETER. I can't. (*runs to CONRAD*) Conrad, you are distressing that poor girl, and hang me——

ROSA. (*sharply to PETER*) Will you mind your own business, sir? Professor Van Kiel——

ERAS. Little boy!

ROSA. Eh! well, I pass it over this time. A word with your eminence. I take it for granted you are proud of these hopeful pupils of yours?

PETER. (*aside*) What's coming now?

ERAS. I am proud of nothing, not even of having crushed that reptile Van Voorst.

ROSA. You are probably aware that Mr. Conrad Bernstorff has been tendering his affections to my cousin Rosa.

ERAS. (*C.*) What! how dare you say that I am aware of any such scandal to my house?

ROSA. (*L. C.*) Well, it is so, whether you are aware of it, or not.

CONRAD. (*L.*) Sir, if this la——

ERAS. Silence, sir, I'll hear this story of abomination to an end, and then pronounce thereon; but as it's very warm had you better not throw aside that pallium, or cloak.

CONRAD. (*aside*) By Jupiter, a good idea! once exposed, shame will keep her silent. (*aloud*) By all means let me take——

PETER. (*R. aside*) No, no, what are you about?

ROSA. Thank you, I'll take it off myself presently. This young gentleman, sir, has inundated my cousin with costly presents, so Rosa tells me.

ERAS. Eh! and where did he steal the money to buy them?

ROSA. Swore with all the oaths he knew, his passionate and perpetual devotion.

ERAS. You blaspheming young dog!

ROSA. And at the same time was carrying on a vulgar correspondence with a vulgar girl, at a wine shop. (*to CONRAD*) So Karl told me.

ERAS. Duplicity and depravity!

CONRAD. (*aside*) I'll strangle that Karl!

ROSA. So much for one of your pupils, now for the other.

PETER. (*aside*) Oh! I'm done for!

ROSA. He also presumed to love my cousin. (*to PETER*) So Karl told me.

PETER. (*groans*) Oh, oh!

ROSA. And had her portrait taken clandestinely. (*to PETER*) So Karl told me.

CONRAD. What!

PETER. (*aside*) Oh, if the earth would only open and let me through!

ROSA. And has basely continued to cherish his insolent passion, without the sanction or knowledge of the lady in question.

ERAS. Superhuman atrocity!

PETER. (*aside*) What can I do—where can I hide? Oh, that Karl, I'll pummel him to death!

ROSA. And now, Professor Van Kiel, I demand, at your hands, in my cousin's name, satisfaction for this double outrage.

ERAS. You shall have it. Conrad Bernstorff, let alone his enormity of introducing Venus into the Temple of Minerva, is a double dealing rogue.

ROSA. He is double dealing, vicious, perfidious and selfish!

ERAS. I'll expel him my house, I will, by St. Nicholas. As for Peter Ten Broeck—

ROSA. Leave his punishment to me.

CONRAD. Professor Van Kiel, this masquing foolery has gone far enough. Let me only remove this seeming boy's cloak. (*approaching ROSA*)

ROSA. No nearer me, sir, if you please. I'll remove it myself! (*throws off cloak; she still wears boy's dress; PETER is dumb with surprise*)

CONRAD. What!

ERAS. Well, what now? What are you staring at the lad in that way for?

PETER. Why, it's—

ROSA. Karl Rosa Van der Linden, at your service. (*PETER catches up cloak, and buries his face in it*)

CONRAD. Rosa and Karl one! (*aside*) Ass—dolt, I've been tricked!

ERAS. The maiden Karl in—in—the toga virilus! My head swims!

ROSA. (*to ERASMUS*) I must pray you, sir, to pardon my levity; but for this wild and somewhat unbecoming freak, I should have given my happiness into the keeping of a heartless husband, and my fortune into the hands of a selfish spendthrift.

CONRAD. (R.) Rosa, hear me!

ROSA. Never! three words more, sir: I am miserably mortified, but you have Fanchette to console you. (*to ERASMUS*) But for this costume, which so offends your gravity, I should never have known the modest, unselfish love of a true and honest man. Peter—(*he groans*)—Peter, come here. (*he approaches timidly*) You would not woo me, Peter; I must be more unmaidenly than ever, and woo you; if you will take me, Peter, I am yours.

PETER. What, mine!—you mine!—Rosa my wife! (*shouts and envelopes ERASMUS's head in the cloak, and falls at ROSA's feet*) Oh, you're not joking?

ROSA. No, Peter, but up this moment—my husband's place is at my side, next my heart, not at my feet. Professor Van Kiel, once more I ask your pardon. Conrad Bernstorff, I forgive and forget you. Peter, this is my first and last vagary. (*comes forward*) Dear friends, never place too much faith on old proverbs, however plausible and popular they may be—for here is a case in which "A Faint Heart *did* win——"

PETER. A Fair Lady!"

CONRAD.

R.

PETER.

ROSA.

ERASMUS.

L.

Curtain.

A
HUNT FOR A HUSBAND.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

(Adapted from the French.)

BY

J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Love in Livery, A Man without a Head, Founded on Facts, A Twice Told Tale
Sisterly Service, Did I Dream It? A Faint Heart who *did* Win Fair Lady,
Orange Blossoms, Old Phil's Birthday, Allow me to Apologize, I'll
Write to the "Times," Keep your Temper, Marriage at any
Price, Plots for Petticoats, The Silver Wedding, The
Maid of Honour, &c. &c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND, LONDON.

HUNT FOR A HUSBAND.

*First Performed at the Royal Strand Theatre (under the
management of Mrs. Swanborough) on Monday the
28th day of March, 1864.*

Characters.

MR. POPPLETON (<i>a retired Furrier</i>)	Mr. H. J. TURNER.
ARTHUR STANLEY.....	Mr. D. JAMES.
JACK SHARP	Mr. A. WOOD.
CHICORY (<i>a Grocer</i>)	Mr. COLLIER.
SERVANT	Mr. EDGE.
MISS POPPLETON.....	Mrs. MANDERS.
MRS. COURTHOPE (<i>a young Widow</i>)	Miss KATE CARSON.
SOPHY (<i>her Niece</i>)	Miss L. WESTON.
MARY ANN	Miss F. HUGHES.

MODERN COSTUMES.

A HUNT FOR A HUSBAND.

SCENE FIRST.—*A Drawing Room. Window, R., at which MRS. COURTHOPE is seated reading; SOPHY at table, L., working.*

SOPHY. You seem interested in your book, aunt.

MRS. C. I seem that which I am not then—the book is supremely tedious, and I am heartily tired of it. (*throws it down and looks out of the window*)

SOPHY. (*aside—taking letter from pocket*) This dear letter of Frederick's fills me with hope. If he be but lucky enough to get the appointment he speaks of—— (*reading*)

MRS. C. (*aside—looking from window*) Gracious! surely my eyes deceive me, that figure, as I am a woman, is Arthur Stanley. How, in wonder's name, has he discovered our retreat? He is looking up—it is he! (*moves from window—SOPHY hides letter*)

SOPHY. As it is so fine a morning, aunt, shall we not have a stroll? Your precious trustee or guardian, or whatever you call him, will break in upon us if we do not make haste.

MRS. C. Poor Mr. Poppleton—and you really dislike him?

SOPHY. I very cordially hate him.

MRS. C. My dear, you express yourself a great deal too strongly on all occasions.

SOPHY. Have I not all the cause in the world to abominate him? A man, who has made up his mind that I shall be married whether I will or no, and has paraded for my inspection all the bachelors in the county.

MRS. C. His determination and perseverance are very natural. Possessor of an ample fortune, an old friend of my poor husband's, who left him executor, he does me the honor to desire my hand, and I have positively given him to understand that I will never re-marry, until you yourself have taken a husband, for which reason——

SOPHY. Aunt, it is no reason at all—it is a piece of tyranny on your part, and persecution on his.

MRS. C. Don't be extravagant, my dear, there is no tyranny in the case. You are an orphan, with nothing but my feeble protection to depend on, and besides, I have not forgotten a certain Mr. Frederick Grantley, who a year since so nearly

compromised you by his attentions, nor shall I ever feel quite sure that you have abandoned that foolish attachment, until I see you on the arm of a husband.

SOPHY. Oh! very well, aunt, I am powerless of course—still——

POPPLETON. (*without, L.*) Saddle me another horse directly.

SOPHY. Oh, mercy! here he comes, and perhaps he's brought another bachelor with him. *Runs off, R.*

Enter POPPLETON, L.

POPPL. (L.) Sophy always runs away when I come in. It's astonishing the powerful impression I've made on that young female.

MRS. C. (R.) She sees the reflection of a husband in you, Mr. Poppleton; you certainly have an extraordinary passion for matrimony.

POPPL. A passion, madam, as natural as it is moral; and I never feel more natural or more moral than when I am at your side—you'll hardly believe me, but marriage has been my ruling passion from infancy. Bless you, I was very nearly being married when I was five years old.

MRS. C. You were a very precocious young gentlemen.

POPPL. Oh! it's a fact—a young lady of my own age fired my combustible heart. I spoke to her papa on the spot, and was not only rejected, but ignominiously chastised and sent to bed—otherwise it would have been a match.

MRS. C. You commenced unfortunately.

POPPL. I did, and have continued so. I have missed about thirty-five young ladies—an average of one a year ever since I was fifteen.

MRS. C. And you are not yet discouraged?

POPPL. Not at all; when one has a calling that way, when one has, as I might say, the bump of "conjugalit'y"—that's a word of my own—besides, I never met my absolute ideal of a wife, until I met you, and since you have held out hopes——

MRS. C. But really, Mr. Poppleton, I am really half afraid of you; thirty-five attachments already! who shall guarantee that I should be the last?

POPPL. The guarantee, madam, is in your own attractions. (*aside*) That was rather neat, I think. (*aloud*) Besides, my character is now formed, and remember, madam, for you I throw to the winds a magnificent alliance, Miss Skimpington, a lady of—ahem!—who has attained her majority—who owns half the county, (*aside*) and wears green spectacles! (*aloud*) Therefore, madam, only say the word, and——

MRS. C. When my niece is married—you know my conditions.

POPPLE. Your conditions! Have I not worked like a coal-whipper to fulfil them? I have hunted up all the unmarried men in the county. I have made, as it were, a *battue* of bachelors within a radius of five miles. I have sought husbands wherever they were likely to be found—nay more, I have sought them where they were not at all likely to be found. I have wormed my way into private families like a Jesuit—I have been taken more than once for an agent of Messrs. Perry & Co.; but it is sufficient to propose any young man for her to refuse him. One because he's too old, another because he's too young, a third because he's neither old nor young—and she refused young Beagle without giving any reason at all; and really if I had not so many proofs of your sincerity—

MRS. C. (*abstractedly*) I beg your pardon.

POPPLE. I say it is almost enough to make me think that the pretended condition is merely a polite mode of—excuse the phrase—giving me the go-by.

MRS. C. My dear Mr. Poppleton, how can you think so? Believe me, I am as much concerned at Lucy's unaccountable rejection of all offers as you can be, and in proof of my sincerity, if before this evening she accepts a suitor—

POPPLE. Yes, well—if—

MRS. C. I will this evening accept one myself!

POPPLE. No!—eh, will you though, really?

MRS. C. (*aside*) I run no risk; there isn't one left in the neighbourhood.

POPPLE. Then say no more! I'll be off round the country again.

MRS. C. (*aside, at window*) There he is again; will he venture to introduce himself? (*aloud, crosses to L.*) I must run away, Mr. Poppleton; if I don't pay your sister a visit, she'll be angry again.

POPPLE. You'll find her in the kitchen, scolding Mary Ann, as usual.

MRS. C. I shall find her somewhere, doubtless. Good morning.

Exit, R.

POPPLE. Now I think matters are coming to a crisis, so I'll go and look for a promising young man, or perhaps as she objects to all the young ones, she'll like an old one! If I happen to catch that young scamp, Chicory, after her again, I'll warm him; but anybody else—anybody—but she seems to me to have no idea of matrimony!—angelic purity! immaculate innocence! Infernal rubbish!

Enter SERVANT, with letter, L.

SERVANT. Letter for you, sir.

Exit, L.

POPPLE. What now! I've proposed her to two or three by

post, perhaps this—(*opening and looking at signature*)—ah! young Locksley, beautiful! If he only accepts her? A handsome fellow!—splendid match! (*reads*) “Dear Poppleton,—You have made me an offer of the hand of Miss Sophy Lloyd; the description you give me of her person, mind, and manners suits me admirably”—Hear, hear!—“and I should be very happy to embrace the offer and the lady as soon as possible”—Hurrah!—“but there is one little difficulty in the way”—Oh, come, if it’s only a *little* difficulty it can be got over.—“the young lady in question is—married already!”—Hilloa!—“secretly, without her aunt’s knowledge, to a Mr. Frederick Grantley; therefore as it would not answer my purpose to be husband No. 2, I must beg to decline most thankfully your handsome offer.—Yours, as ever, Charles Locksley.” Married! Married! well, I’ve made a precious ass of myself. I could have married twenty girls with the men she has refused; but never mind, she has a husband, and Mrs. C.’s conditions are fulfilled—so my little game’s won. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

SCENE SECOND.—*A Room partially fitted up as a Kitchen; door, L. C.; doors, R. and L.; fireplace, C.; fire lighted.*

Enter MARY ANN, R.

MARY A. Dear me! I wish those nasty whitewashers and men would make haste and get out of my kitchen. How the deuce do they expect a girl to cook in such a place as this? Now where is that tiresome grocer? he was to have followed me straight home with the things—Oh, at last! (*CHICORY peeps in timidly at door, L. C.*)

CHICOR. I say, Mary Ann, is that savage old master of yours about yet?

MARY A. You’ll find *me* about—your ears, if you don’t make haste! Come in, do. (*comes down L. of table*)

CHICORY *enters timidly, places parcel on table.*

Why, good gracious me! what are you trembling about?

CHICOR. That old furrier your master is the terror of my existence—he’s the most vicious old cove! he has passed all his life in dressing the skins of tigers, panthers, and bears, and has caught the ferocious nature of all those beasts himself—in fact, he never meets me, but he—(*makes a gesture of kicking*) to that extent, that I should know his kick among a hundred!

MARY A. Then you should have known better than to make up to his daughter Sophy; as if he would give her to *you*—a grocer man in an apron, indeed! Why, if you’d asked for *me* he wouldn’t have let you had me.

CHICOR. He will when I ask him, I dare say.

MARY A. Don't be saucy ; but he wouldn't ! he and his sister have most ridiculous, not to say irreligious, views on a servant's marrying—bless you, wouldn't have a girl with a husband on any account ! When I came here six months ago, "I hope," says missis, "you've got no followers—police, grenadiers, or omnibus men." "And particularly no husband," says master.

CHICOR. Selfish old ruffian ! But I say, Mary Ann, couldn't you manage me a sight of Miss Sophy ? never mind about her morning dress.

MARY A. See Miss Sophy ? well, I——

CHICOR. Yes, only see her ; I don't want to speak to her—I only want to give her this little note.

MARY A. Rose-coloured, I declare !

CHICOR. Oh, I do it rather spicily, I can tell you ; I *address* it to nobody, and I *sign* it nobody ; I've sent her lots, bless you ! I slip 'em under the kitchen garden gate.

MARY A. You don't say so ! Oh, you're an artful young man for a grocer, *you* are !

CHICOR. Yes, rather ; and she answers them in the same way, on green paper.

MARY A. A very suitable colour for you. Why, you ninny, do you fancy I'm green, too, to believe that stuff ? why Miss Sophy never goes into the kitchen garden, only me and missis.

CHICOR. Never goes there !

MARY A. Don't open your mouth in that way—no, never !

CHICOR. Good gracious ! but then, Mary Ann, my green answers ?

MARY A. What should I know about them ? (*aside*) Is there any chance that my immaculate missis has——

POPPLE. (*without*) Susannah !

MARY A. There's master calling missis ! run away, or beware the boot !

CHICOR. He can only have slippers on at this time in the morning ; but will you give Miss Sophy this note ?

MARY A. I ? Oh, if——

CHICOR. (*forcing note upon her*) There, there, I know you will ; remember, I've promised you twenty pounds if we're married.

MARY A. (*putting note in her apron pocket*) Ah ! you promise ?

CHICOR. You shall have them—upon my honour !

MARY A. (*pushing him off*) Quick, quick—do get along !

CHICOR. (*re-appearing*) You shall have them—upon my soul !

Exit, L. C.

MARY A. Poor wretch ! however, I'll give her the note. I should dearly like to get at the writer of the green answers. I'll be whipt if I don't think it is——

POPPLE. (*without*, L. D.) Susannah!

Enter POPPLETON, L. door.

MARY A. (*aside*) Exactly!

POPPLE. Why, Mary Ann, where's your mistress? Susannah!

Enter MISS POPPLETON, R. door.

MISS P. Dear me, brother, what a noise you make! Can't you give a gir time to shake out her ringlets?

MARY A. (*aside*) Girl! ringlets! Well, I'm sure! short frocks and trousers next.

MISS P. (*sharply*) Mary Ann!

MARY A. La, miss, how you made me jump.

MISS P. I'll trouble you not to jump here, miss; this is not your kitchen. Who were you talking to just now whilst I was dressing?

MARY A. La, ma'am, only young Chicory, the grocer.

POPPLE. Ah! a rascal I have almost worn out a pair of boots over.

MARY A. Well, sir, he must bring the things that are ordered.

POPPLE. I'll tell you what it is, if old Chicory sends him here again, hanged if I don't withdraw my custom, or buy a pair of double soled boots, with iron tips, but—stop. Susannah, I want to speak to you—step with me for a moment.

MISS P. Dear me, Peter, what a trouble you are! I suppose you've got another husband for Sophy?

POPPLE. No, my dear, certainly not! I think I shall have time to look after one for you now.

MISS P. Peter! (*aside*) I must go and see if there's another dear rose-coloured note for me under the gate.

POPPLE. Come along—will you?

MISS P. Dear me, brother, what a fidget you are!

Exeunt POPPLETON and MISS POPPLETON, L. door.

MARY A. Well, it's very agreeable this—master head over heels in love with his ward—his sister carrying on a correspondence with a grocer, and the whole neighbourhood being ransacked for a husband for Miss Sophy. It doesn't matter to me certainly—I'm comfortable enough, provided my precious husband doesn't turn up. I think he's pretty safe, going round the country with his magnificent invention of gutta percha pavement; and before he's paved all the towns in England that want paving, old Poppleton'll be a grandfather. Dear me, this room's enough to craze one!

Enter JACK SHARP, with parcel, L. C.

JACK. I say, young woman, does Mary Ann—

MARY A. (*screaming*) Ha! that voice!

JACK. (L.) 'Tis she! my own Mary Ann!

MARY A. (R.) My husband! oh, you wretch! What do you come here for?

JACK. Just her old affectionate, warm-hearted manner. My darling Mary Ann, give me a kiss!

MARY A. I could give you a box on the ears with a great deal more pleasure! but there, take one! (JACK *kisses her*)

JACK. I knew you'd be glad to see me. Here, I've brought you a beautiful morning gown and a splendacious cap. Like to see 'em?

MARY A. No—no! it's very kind of you—(*takes parcel and places it on chair, R.*)—but to come tumbling down on one in this way—when you promised to be away a twelvemonth at least!

JACK. My dear, I've been wretched for six months, human nature could stand it no longer! so I have brought you back a heart burning with love, (*aside*) and a little jealousy!

MARY A. Well, you don't suppose you're going to stop here, do you?

JACK. I think I could take a glass of something, Mary Ann.

MARY A. I don't doubt that for a moment! here then, you may have a little of this brandy, but not much, because it's for the puddings. (*pours out glass*)

JACK. (*drinks*) First rate! Now, I dare say you'd like to know what's brought me back to your arms so soon? You shall. After we'd dissipated our private fortune, you know, at the "Red Lion," in consequence of the culpable sobriety of our customers, and you went into this situation, I determined to give the benighted towns of England the benefit of my new gutta percha pavement. I say, my dear, I think I could eat a morsel of something.

MARY A. Well, I'd make myself at home. There—there's some ham for you, and do make haste and eat it. (*places plate, &c.*)

JACK. (*sits*) Well, my dear, I went first to—— Never mind the name of the place, but they play at soldiers there, and a very nice place it is for the game; but would you believe it, they hadn't got a square foot of pavement in the whole extent of it. That was pleasant for a man who wanted to coat the pavement with gutta percha. I'll trouble you for a little more brandy.

MARY A. Now, my dear Jack, do finish your story and be off. There! (*takes bottle away*) You won't have a drop more.

JACK. Thank you. Well, I wasn't going to be beat. I was determined to shew them what I could do if they had a pavement, and, after some trouble, I got permission to lay my

gutta percha down on a paved courtyard in the barracks, which they playfully called a parade ground, and which would hold, uncomfortably, about fifty people; so there I set to work with my melting-pots and the rest—the officers were running about holding their noses for about a week; but I didn't care two-pence about their noses. Well, the day came for testing my grand invention, and a blazing-hot day it was. The men were turned out—all the town was there to see. They went through their evolutions beautifully—loud applause. All right, thinks I—I knew I should astonish them. At last they formed and stood at ease. So did I. Perfect success—they had nothing to do but to march into barracks. They stood still for about five minutes, when the officer shouted, "Right about face—march!" but devil a one stirred. The officer was astonished and cried, "Quick march!" Deuce a bit—their knees tried to get on, but not a foot could they move—the sun had played the dickens with my pavement, and it held them fast as nails. We had to get all the pick-axes in the place to get 'em off again, or they'd have remained there till now. Thus you see, my famous invention got knocked on the head. I got disgusted, and determined to return to the bosom of my wife and—future family.

MARY A. Well, but you can't stay here, I tell you.

JACK. Mary Ann, I am horribly jealous—jealous of the butcher—the baker—the milkman and the pot-boy. I enquired in the neighbourhood, and find you are here as an unmarried woman. I demand to know, Mrs. Sharp, why you have renounced the name of your lord and master? (*eating*)

MARY A. Because master and missus won't have a married servant; they say the husbands eat the victuals.

JACK. (*with his mouth full*) Suspicious old humbugs.

MARY A. But tell me how you came by that livery?

JACK. New situation—Mr. Arthur Stanley—we're here after a lady.

MARY A. What! another love affair? Hark! some one coming. It's master—it's all up with us.

JACK. Can't you stow me away somewhere?

MARY A. He's coming—quick! in my room there!

JACK. (*snatching up parcel*) Where? here?—all right!

Runs into Miss Poppleton's room, R.

MARY A. No—no! come back, that's missus's. (*stops frightened*)

Enter CHICORY, L. C.

CHICOR. Hist! Mary Ann!

MARY A. The deuce take you, you tiresome—— Oh! what a fright you put me in.

CHICOR. Have you given her the note?

MARY A. Let me alone, do, and go along with you—go along, I say! (JACK *peeps out*)

JACK. (*aside*) Who the deuce is that chap?

CHICOR. But I say, dear Mary Ann.

MARY A. Go away directly!

JACK. (*aside*) A chap in an apron says "dear Mary Ann."

CHICOR. I never saw you cross before, Mary Ann.

JACK. (*aside*) I'm in the way now—this is why she wanted to get rid of me.

CHICOR. You who know my love, and who sympathize with me—for you *do* sympathize with me, don't you, Mary Ann?

MARY A. Well, if I do——

JACK. (*aside*) The devil she does. (*raises parcel as if to throw at CHICORY.*)

MARY A. (*seeing him*) Ah! (*she runs to R. door and closes it upon him just as POPPLETON enters, L. C., behind CHICORY, who has been gradually receding; POPPLETON gives him a smart kick which sends him forward—he remains immoveable*)

CHICOR. Oh! (*aside*) It's Poppleton—I know his kick.

POPPL. So you're here again, you young scoundrel, are you.

CHICOR. Respected sir, I——

POPPL. Hold your tongue, you burglarious villain; not satisfied with insulting my young ward with your abominable persecution, you must try to corrupt my maid, must you. (*advances towards him*) Be off with you, or——

CHICOR. Yes—sir—I will—if you please.

POPPL. Let me see your back.

CHICORY. (*terrified*) No, never, if I know it. (*backs out and runs against MISS POPPLETON who enters, door, L. C.*)

MISS P. (*pushing him forward—he runs off*) You clumsy creature, where are you running to?

MARY A. (*aside*) Missis! and Jack's in her room!

POPPL. (*aside*) I've sounded Susannah, but she's not in Miss Sophy's confidence; but ten to one the maid is, so I must have a little conversation with her. (*aloud*) Now, Susannah, are you going to look after that little matter?

MISS P. Directly, Peter, but you wouldn't have me go without my bonnet? (*going towards her room—crosses to R.C.*)

MARY A. (*stopping her*) Hadn't I better fetch your things, miss?

MISS P. If I had thought so, I should have told you to fetch them.

MARY A. Please, miss, I've just been doing the room, and it's all in an uproar. (*crosses to door*)

MISS P. Never mind; don't stand before me, girl—let me

go in. (*as she is about to enter, MARY ANN screams and falls into chair*)

MARY A. Ah! Ah! oh—miss!

POPPLE. Hilloa! What now? Here's Mary Ann in a fit!

MISS P. Bless me, girl, don't do that.

POPPLE. (*shaking her*) Don't, Mary Ann, you've no business to be taken ill in my presence.

MISS P. Where's my vinaigrette? Oh, on my dressing table. (*going for it*)

MARY A. (*jumping up*) Oh, no, thank you, ma'am. Don't, it's all over.

MISS P. Mary Ann—there's something in this——

POPPLE. Or rather—(*pointing to door*)—there's something in that.

MISS P. In my room?

POPPLE. I know it. Mary Ann, I demand to know who is in there.

MARY A. (*aside*) It's all over. (*aloud*) Why—sir—miss—it's only——

MISS P. Then there is somebody there?

POPPLE. In Susannah's chamber!

MISS P. (*aside*) Perhaps it's the writer of the rose-coloured notes—how very imprudent!

POPPLE. And that somebody's—a man! (*crosses to R.C.*)

MARY A. Oh, if you please, sir, it's only—— (*as POPPLETON rushes towards door it opens, and JACK appears in wrapper and cap he had brought for MARY ANN*)

JACK. (*curtseying*) Servant; sir, madam——

MISS P. (*aside, L.C.*) A woman! I breathe again!

POPPLE. Who is this female?

MARY A. (L.) Oh—sir—it's only——

JACK. (R.) Yes—sir—only Matilda Anna Maria Sharp—a friend of Mary Ann's, which we was at the Fondling together, so I come just to give her a helping hand, sir, if you please—

POPPLE. Ah—well—quite right, eh, Susannah? Very good girl—not bad-looking either!

MISS P. (*severely*) Peter!

POPPLE. Susannah!

MARY A. (*aside*) What an impudent fellow it is.

MISS P. But, I say, Anna Maria Jane, what were you doing in my room?

JACK. I went in, ma'am, just before going to work, to loosen my dress a bit.

POPPLE. (L. C.) Certainly, quite proper, I know it's the usu——

MISS P. Peter!

POPPLE. All right, Susannah; now just take Anna Maria

Isabella into another room, will you, for a few minutes; I want to speak to Mary Ann. (*retires a little*)

JACK. (*crosses to L. C.*) I've boned one of the old gal's jasies. I say, Mary Ann, have you got a apron to lend a fel—— ahem! a young woman?

MARY A. Here, take mine! (*gives it him—aside*) What a fright!

MISS P. Come along, young woman, I'll set you to work.

JACK. (*aside*) I don't like leaving Mary Ann with this old fellow.

MISS P. (*aside*) What can Peter have to say to Mary Ann in private, I wonder. (*aloud*) Come along, young woman. (*going up to door*)

JACK. Now, old wom—— Yes, ma'am, coming, ma'am!

Exeunt MISS P. and JACK, *door L. C.*

MARY A. (*aside*) He'll be up to some of his nonsense, and be found out in ten minutes.

POPPLE. (R. C.) Mary Ann, I regret to be in a position to say what I have to say, but I am in that position and therefore I shall say it.

MARY A. (*aside, L. C.*) Mercy on us! what now?

POPPLE. I have discovered that there is a young female in this house who is—a—married female.

MARY A. (*aside*) Gracious!

POPPLE. Married without the knowledge of my sister and myself.

MARY A. (*aside*) It's all over! My sittyvation's gone!

POPPLE. Now don't be alarmed, Mary Ann, I'm not going to be angry, but tell me truly if——

MARY A. Oh! Mr. Poppleton, sir, I confess it!

POPPLE. (*aside*) I thought Mary Ann was in her confidence!

MARY A. But, upon my word, sir, I never knew he was in the neighbourhood.

POPPLE. In the neighbourhood?

MARY A. And I'm sure if I could have prevented it, he should never have come into the house.

POPPLE. Into the house!—he is in the house, then?

MARY A. Oh, yes, sir, he would come in. Please forgive me, and I'll confess everthing. You remember the young woman who was here just now?

POPPLE. What, Anna Maria Jane——

MARY A. Yes, sir, that's him, sir!

POPPLE. I'm galvanized! that woman the other woman's husband!

MARY A. Oh, but that woman's a man, sir!

POPPLE. (*aside*) Here's a discovery. (*aloud*) And does Miss Sophy know this?

MARY A. Oh dear, no, sir; and pray, please sir, don't tell her!

POPPLE. I won't, Mary Ann, I won't—(*aside*)—at present. (*aloud*) Don't be uneasy, Mary Ann; you shall get into no trouble, depend upon it. (*aside—crosses to L.*) That young hussy, Sophy! I'll teach her to run me off my legs husband-hunting for her. *Exit, door L. C.*

MARY A. Bless me, who'd have thought the old man would have been so pleasant over things; I shouldn't wonder if he made Jack gardener, or butler, or something, and let him live in the house. He's a dear, good old soul, and I hope with all my heart Mrs. Courthope will marry him, after all.

Enter MISS POPPLETON, door L. C.

MISS P. Mary Ann, let me hear no mention of marriage in this house, or any such odious subject. Mrs. Courthope wants you, directly. *Exit, R. door.*

MARY A. Very well, ma'am. "Odious," indeed; I think I know someone who wouldn't object to a little odiousness of that sort on her own account. Where can Jack be? I know he'll get into some mischief or other. *Exit, door L.*

Re-enter JACK, door L. C..

JACK. I wonder how the deuce women manage with such things as petticoats! I've tumbled twice down stairs, and three times up. Where's Mary Ann? I'm very glad I'm back; she's too pretty to leave about—not that I'm jealous—that's a thing I'd scorn—jealous, indeed! (*puts his hand in apron pocket and pulls out CHICORY's note*) Hilloa! I say, that won't do; a letter in my wife's pocket!—a coloured letter, too!—and, bah! how it smells! talk of my gutta percha—that's scent, I suppose. I shouldn't wonder if that wretch in a white apron sent this! Come open with you, do—(*opens it*)—hm! hm!—(*turns it upside down*)—here's a heart with an arrow bang through it!—And—ah!—this miscreant can write, but I, miserable ass that I am, can't read! Oh, father, father, why didn't you send me to school, if only to be able to read my wife's love-letters? (*goes up stage, trying to make it out, as MISS POPPLETON enters R., with a man's hat in her hand—holds it behind her on seeing JACK*)

MISS P. (*aside, door R.*) My suspicions were correct—Anna Maria is a man—I wasn't to be deceived; without doubt he's my mysterious correspondent.

JACK. (*aside, L. up stage*) Here's the missis; perhaps she knows how to read.

MISS P. (*aside*) His excitement now, on seeing me, betrays him. (*aloud*) Young man.

JACK. Eh? Matilda—Jane—Anna Ma——

MISS P. Enough, sir, enough! do you recognize this? (*holds up hat*)

JACK. (*aside*) My chimney pot! I'm bowled out!

MISS P. You left it by accident in my chamber—what shocking imprudence! suppose my brother had gone in! (*puts hat down*)

JACK. My dear madam, you must know——

MISS P. No explanations, I know all. (*astonishment of JACK*) You are a thoughtless, reckless, good-for-nothing man, and I ought to send you away at once, but that would perhaps create an explanation which would annihilate me.

JACK. Thank you, ma'am. Oh, if you please, ma'am, I have a favour to ask of you—a great favour. (*MISS P. looks down bashfully*) Do you know how to read?

MISS P. What a question, sir!

JACK. (*presenting rose-coloured note*) Then will you do me the great kindness to read that?

MISS P. (*modestly*) A rose-coloured note, (*aside*) as usual. (*aloud*) Really, sir, I hardly know whether I ought——

JACK. You won't? then give it me, and I'll go and ask the master to read it.

MISS P. My brother! Stop, wretched man, I will consent to read it, on one condition—that it is the last.

JACK. Oh, I've got no more of them.

MISS P. But, good gracious! if any one should——

JACK. (*impatently*) There's not a stray cat about!—go on, ma'am.

MISS P. (*affectedly on looking at letter*) Still these silly flatteries!

JACK. I dare say—go on—who's it to?

MISS P. (*reading*) "To her."

JACK. (*aside*) To be sure, of course—my wife's "*her*."

MISS P. (*reads*) "Angel." (*modestly*) Oh!

JACK. (*angrily*) Ah, it is "*Oh*," indeed!—go on.

MISS P. (*reading*) "In spite of your letters, which seem written with a feather from your own wing——"

JACK. (*aside*) Her wing! does he think women are poultry? (*aloud*) Go on, ma'am.

MISS P. (*reading*) "In spite of your letters, which——"

JACK. (*interrupting*) Oh, it won't bear reading twice—go on.

MISS P. (*reading*) "My love cannot live upon them alone."
—Hark! Oh, my! here's somebody coming.

Runs off, R. door.

JACK. Here—hi! stop! damme, she's off, and taken my wife's letter with her! Never mind, I know enough to curdle the blood of a husband. Here, on this hearth, will I await her—with this weapon (*snatching up basting ladle*) will I destroy her!

Enter CHICORY, door L. C., cautiously, not seeing JACK.

CHICOR. No one in the hall—no one here—where can Mary Ann be?

JACK. (*aside*) The very villain! woe, woe to him! (*brandishing ladle*)

CHICOR. (*softly, at wing*) Mary Ann—Mary Ann! (*JACK gives a blow on the back with ladle*)

CHICOR. (*fixed and motionless*) It isn't Poppleton—it's too high for him! (*JACK turns him smartly round*) What, a new cook! Where's Mary Ann? Is she gone?

JACK. (*folding his arms—sternly*) "Angel!"

CHICOR. Angel! get along with you, do, you forward hussey!

JACK. "In spite of your letters, which seem written with your wings"——

CHICOR. Ha! my letter!

JACK. Oh! it is your letter, then, you blackguard! is it?

(*advances threateningly upon him—he retreats towards door at back during following dialogue*)

CHICOR. What do you mean, woman?

JACK. You love—"Her!"

CHICOR. And she loves me!

JACK. Ha! (*another blow with ladle*)

CHICOR. Honourably, you harpy; I'll marry her, and she consents to——

JACK. She consents! villian! (*strikes him*)

CHICOR. I say, cook, come!

JACK. I'm no cook, you monkey, I'm the proprietor of your victim!

CHICOR. What, a rival in disguise! Come on! (*squares up to JACK*)

JACK. (*striking him*) Would you—would you?

CHICOR. (*backing out as POPPLETON enters L. C.*) Help! help! help! (*POPPLETON kicks him as usual—he stops short and says confidently*) That's Poppleton!

POPPLE. (C.) So, you're after my cook, now—abandoned miscreant!

CHICOR. But I've made a discovery!

POPPLE. Get out, you vicious vagabond—get out! (*kicks CHICORY, off, door L. C.—to JACK, shaking his head archly*) Ah, ha! ah, ha!

JACK. (*aside*) What's the old buffalo wagging his head at me for?

POPPLE. (*with a dig in JACK's side*) Sly rogue! sly rogue!

JACK. (*aside*) This is a nice family, first the sister, then the brother. (*aloud*) I say, old gentleman, this won't do! I'm a well-conducted young woman!

POPPLE. Hush! I know all, young man; but don't be alarmed, I'll keep your secret, and I applaud your taste. You have a very pretty wife!

JACK. Not a bad sort, sir. (*aside*) How the deuce did he find it out?

POPPLE. I can hardly blame you for marrying her, all I object to is your having done so without giving me notice.

JACK. Oh! If I'd known that, I'd have given you a look in, and told you all about it.

POPPLE. She's a charming girl! I love her myself, extremely!

JACK. (*aside*) The deuce you do! I'll have to pitch into this old chap presently. What the plague do they all mean by being in love with my wife?

POPPLE. I shall take every means to smooth matters, and to ensure your happiness.

JACK. Thank you, sir, and to begin with, I wish you'd speak to a man in an apron who writes her red letters and calls her an "angel."

POPPLE. It must be that villain Chicory, a grocer! My dear friend, I assure you that miscreant costs me a pair of boots a month. I have to kick him on an average fourteen times a day.

JACK. I'll take that trouble off your hands, sir. (*aside*) I hope you won't want a little of that sort of thing yourself!

POPPLE. Now, my friend, go and throw off those ridiculous petticoats, and be in readiness when I want you—excuse me—must run away—keep up your spirits, my dear Grantley, and trust to me!

Exit, door L. C.

JACK. Here, I say—"Grantley!" Who the deuce is he? That's an insulting old blade! first of all, he says he's in love with my wife, and then he calls me "Grantley." I shan't stand this any longer! I must go and find Mary Ann! "Grantley," indeed! perhaps that's another husband of my wife's. Oh, here! Mary Ann! Mary Ann!

Exit, door L. C.

Enter SOPHY, door, L.

SOPHY. At last, then, I find myself alone, no other room to go to—ah! hopeless, here's Mr. Poppleton!

Re-enter POPPLETON, door L. C.

POPPLE. (*rubbing his hands*) Aha!

SOPHY. You seem pleased, Mr. Poppleton, have you been lucky enough to find me another suitor?

POPPLE. No, my dear Sophy, I've had such a run of ill luck with my bachelors that I have found you something better—more substantial—a husband!

SOPHY. (*alarmed*) A husband!

POPPLE. Yes, mad—— miss, a husband—Mr. Frederick Grantley!

SOPHY. (*aside*) All is discovered! (*aloud*) Oh! sir, silence, for mercy's sake—if my aunt should know; but, oh! promise me she shall not know—you, only you!

POPPLE. Mad—— miss—no, madam, do you suppose that an honourable man who has been mystified for six months—who has been chivied all over the country—will, when the young person—the married young person, who——

SOPHY. Hush—hush! pray, sir, do not talk so loud.

POPPLE. The young married person allows him to tear about like a madman, looking after a husband for her, and she, at the same time, a respectable married woman!

SOPHY. Oh! sir, speak lower for goodness' sake.

POPPLE. Shall not that honourable and mystified individual embrace an opportunity of revenge?

SOPHY. Oh! no—you will not seek revenge—you will have pity on me.

POPPLE. (*aside*) If she begins to cry I'm done for. Let me be firm.

SOPHY. In that hope, sir, I confess all—I am married, and poor Frederick is now in town, anxiously waiting an appointment, which will enable him to claim me.

POPPLE. Listen to what your aunt said to-day—if I succeeded in finding you a husband before the evening she would consent to become Mrs. Poppleton—therefore, you perceive——

SOPHY. Oh! I see, you will reveal all to my aunt—you will betray

POPPLE. Love, madam, makes all men selfish. (*calmly*) I will betray you.

SOPHY. Ah, sir! pray for pity's sake——

POPPLE. Entreaties are useless—I have made up my mind—I will betray you!

SOPHY. Oh! sir—you—so good—so generous—— (*weeping*)

POPPLE. (*aside*) It's no use, I can't stand it. (*aloud*) How dare you cry? Be quiet! No, miss—madam, I will *not* betray you. I will say nothing to your aunt, but upon one condition, that you will accept to-day any person I may offer you as a husband.

SOPHY. Why, sir, surely you——

POPPLE. That is—you will pretend to accept him. I know you can't marry half-a-dozen men. It will only be for an hour or so—to give your aunt time to keep her promise to me.

SOPHY. Well, sir, I consent—and you on your side promise—

POPPLE. Silence—the most profound. Now, let me see—whom shall I present to you? Young Beagle.

SOPHY. Oh! pray no.

POPPLER. What's the odds—the nearest's the best, and he's always strolling about the place. Let's see if he's—— (*goes to window*) Ha! what do I see? Arthur Stanley! Providence, I thank thee!

SOPHY. What now, sir?

POPPLER. My dear Mrs. G, a magnificent suitor. Don't talk. (*opens window*) Ho! there—hilloa! Stanley! I'm here—Poppleton! Come in! He's coming—this is beautiful.

SOPHY. You will at least allow me to run away?

POPPLER. Certainly—vanish!

SOPHY. (*aside*) I am sure some terrible mischance will arise and betray me. *Exit, L. door.*

POPPLER. Only fancy—just turned up in the nick of—— Ah! my dear Stanley!

Enter ARTHUR STANLEY, door L. C.

ARTHUR. (L.) My dear Poppleton!

POPPLER. (R.) By what stroke of good luck, or rather by what "fluke," if I may use the word, have you turned up here—almost on our very hearthstone?

ARTHUR. (*aside*) Our hearth; he fancies himself secure then already. (*aloud*) My dear Poppleton, it was no fluke at all, it was pure design. I have tried to catch you for some days, but you were always out.

POPPLER. I have been over a great deal of ground lately in search of a——

ARTHUR. Fresh property to annex to your own?

POPPLER. Not exactly; but I have a fresh property on hand which I want to annex to somebody else; but you have something to say to me—out with it.

ARTHUR. I wish you to introduce me formally to Mrs. Courthope. It is true, I am not altogether unacquainted with her, still I could not have ventured to better my acquaintance save under the wing of a friend, and I understand you are on very intimate terms.

POPPLER. (*conceitedly*) H'm! yes, pretty well, I believe.

ARTHUR. I admit that I come here with certain intentions.

POPPLER. Matrimonial?

ARTHUR. Why should I deny it? Yes!

POPPLER. Good, excellent—not for Mrs. Courthope though?

ARTHUR. That would be carrying my pretensions very high.

POPPLER. So it would; her niece, Sophy, then, eh?

ARTHUR. Well, you say so.

POPPLER. My dear fellow, your hand—the other. I congratulate you; consider yourself a married man—I answer for everything—I'll present you at once and announce your intentions.

ARTHUR. (*aside*) Confound him, he'll ruin all. (*aloud*) My dear Poppleton——

POPPL. Hush! Not a word. She's here!

Enter MRS. COURTHOPE, L.

MRS. C. (*aside*) Arthur here!——

POPPL. My dear madam, my friend, Mr. Arthur Stanley, was impatiently waiting to be introduced to you.

MRS. C. Mr. Stanley has no need of an introduction. I met him in London last season, and we were so much beholden to his politeness, that it is not likely either Sophy or myself should forget him.

POPPL. Hear, hear. (*aside to* ARTHUR) Now's your time. (*aloud*) You and your charming niece, madam, have made a powerful impression on my young friend here.

MRS. C. (*aside*) Has he made a confidant of this man?—how imprudent!

POPPL. Yes, a powerful impression. (*aside to her*) He's over head and ears in love with Sophy.

MRS. C. (*to him*) What do you say?

POPPL. (*to her*) And has come to demand her in marriage.

MRS. C. (*aside*) Is it possible?

POPPL. (*to her*) He'll suit her I hope? (*aside to* ARTHUR) All's going swimmingly!

ARTHUR. (*aside*) Cursed meddler! he'll ruin me, and I can't get a chance of explaining.

MRS. C. (*to* POPPLETON) An admirable match, certainly. (*aside*) What humiliation!

ARTHUR. (*aside*) She's certainly angry. (*to* POPPLETON) What the devil are you about?

MRS. C. (*aside*) Never, never, will I give my consent.

POPPL. (*to* ARTHUR) Now, my boy, it's all right, make your offer in form; you don't want me, I've paved the way for you. (*aside*) At last I've made a hit, and I shall be Mrs.—no, she'll be Mrs. Poppleton, after all. *Exit, door* L. C.

MRS. C. (*coolly*) I congratulate you, Mr. Stanley; if I understand rightly from Mr. Poppleton the object of your visit.

ARTHUR. He has deceived you, madam, for I was obliged to deceive him.

MRS. C. Then you are not here to ask Sophy's hand.

ARTHUR. Oh, madam, you know that I am not; but have I not to reproach you? Did you not leave London without a hint as to where you were going—even after your promise? Chance alone directed me to you—chance informed me of Poppleton's designs upon you and your conditions; it was, in fact, a letter from Poppleton himself that——

MRS. C. That showed small discretion on his part.

ARTHUR. The letter offered me the hand of your niece, of whom he sent a full and, I presume, accurate description.

MRS. C. Ha! ha! ha! So he has even sent to London for a husband. I should not have given him credit for so much energy. If he meets with many more disappointments here, he'll be sending to New York; he threatened to stop travellers on the highway a month ago.

ARTHUR. Pray, madam, let her hear nothing of this absurd misapprehension, and I beseech you to retain my overtures of marriage for another person.

MRS. C. Ah! for whom, then?

ARTHUR. Can you ask? there are but two ladies to marry here.

MRS. C. Very plainly put; am I to understand that you wish to marry me?

ARTHUR. I have come a hundred miles to tell you so.

MRS. C. But you forget my conditions.

ARTHUR. I forget nothing; will you listen to me? Miss Sophy has refused every suitor offered by Mr. Poppleton.

MRS. C. Undoubtedly.

ARTHUR. Did it ever occur to Mr. Poppleton, amongst others, to offer *himself*?

MRS. C. Ha, ha! what an idea!

ARTHUR. The idea, madam; it is an idea, take my word for it; this solves the enigma, Sophy loves and will marry only—Mr. Poppleton.

MRS. C. Marry Mr. Poppleton? ridiculous!

ARTHUR. Girls have had ridiculous fancies before now; besides, he has been kind to her—her only male companion for months; and then he loves you, and that may pique her; but depend upon it, however it is, so it is—Poppleton is the only man who will carry Sophy.

MRS. C. Well, there may be something in it, really; at the first glance the thing looked preposterous enough, but Poppleton is a man of good disposition, quite an original, and——

ARTHUR. There, you see your condition is fulfilled—hush! he is coming back. Am I then to understand, madam, that you reject my proposals for your niece?

MRS. C. Entirely.

ARTHUR. There is no hope?

MRS. C. None; my refusal is final!

ARTHUR. Oh, madam, you overwhelm me with joy.

Exit MRS. COURTHOPE, L.

Enter POPPLETON, L. C. door in flat.

POPPL. Well, my boy?

ARTHUR. Mrs. Courthope has refused my proposals for Miss Lloyd.

POPPL. Refused!

ARTHUR. Absolutely.

POPPL. Why, hang me, if you don't look as smiling over it as if——

ARTHUR. It is the smile of despair, my dear Poppleton; but forgive me. I must run away, I want my blockhead of a groom; I've been looking for him this half hour. *Exit, door L. C.*

POPPL. Refuse Stanley! she does it on purpose to out-manceuvre me. Very well, then, it must all come out, that's certain. Oh, here she comes!

Re-enter MRS. COURTHOPE, L.

Madam, I am savage—and impossible as it may appear—savage with you!

MRS. C. With me? how have I been so unfortunate as to——

POPPL. You have refused Mr. Stanley's offer for Sophy.

MRS. C. I have.

POPPL. And why? may I ask——why?

MRS. C. Because I will not not sacrifice her happiness. I refused Mr. Stanley because Sophy——loves another.

POPPL. (*aside*) Ah! Grantley, of course. (*aloud*) Loves another! Then she has confessed?

MRS. C. No, I have discovered!

POPPL. And you forgave her?

MRS. C. Oh, so pure—so natural a passion——

POPPL. So you know her heart and hand are no longer hers?

MRS. C. I do! I know that both, whenever you choose to claim them, are yours!

POPPL. Mine!

MRS. C. No false modesty, Mr. Poppleton, I beg——

POPPL. But, madam, you know nothing of the confounded circumstances—if you only guessed. Why she's a—(*aside*)—and I daren't say what she is—ass! to make promises, and keep them! (*aloud*) I understand, madam; this is a new scheme to get rid of me!

MRS. C. Sir, you are very unjust, and if Sophy were here——

POPPL. Luckily she is here! now, you can ask her, madam.

Enter SOPHY, L. door.

MRS. C. I will ask her, and before you!

POPPL. Before me! (*aside*) Here's a position! however, she'll reject me at once—that's one comfort.

SOPHY. I thought I heard high words here. (*aside*) Surely, he has not betrayed me.

MRS. C. No, my dear, we were only on the old subject, a lover for you.

SOPHY. A subject so old, aunt, it is time it was dead and buried.

MRS. C. This is a bashful lover, who has waited his turn; one who has offered you many suitors, but has reserved his chief offer for the last.

POPPLE. (*aside*) This is abominable!

SOPHY. The last are not always the worst received. Who is your new protégé, Mr. Poppleton? I'm all anxiety.

MRS. C. Silly child! Does not your heart tell you, it is *himself*!

SOPHY. (*stupefied*) What! he!

POPPLE. (*aside to MRS. COURTHOPE*) But, madam, this is a most deplorable position!

MRS. C. Answer, Sophy! Is it not true, Mr. Poppleton has nothing to dread from any rivals?

SOPHY. Certainly not, aunt! (*aside*) I cannot conceive what his object can be; but of course he wants me to accept him, according to agreement.

MRS. C. My dear, you hesitate! Do you refuse Mr. Poppleton too?

SOPHY. I must avow it. Aunt, I cannot dissemble—I will marry Mr. Poppleton with pleasure.

POPPLE. What!

MRS. C. Of course you will. Sophy, here! (*takes her hand*) Mr. Poppleton. (*takes his hand*)

POPPLE. (*aside*) She is going to unite and bless us!

MRS. C. (*joining their hands*) May you be happy. Bless you, my children. (*retires up*)

POPPLE. (*aside to SOPHY*) What the deuce did you mean by accepting me?

SOPHY. However could you ask for me, knowing as you did——

POPPLE. Ask for you! May I ask if you have really any designs upon me?

SOPHY. Sir!

POPPLE. Because all I have to say is—your husband's in the house.

SOPHY. Mercy! Frederick here—where! where is he? Madman!

Enter MISS POPPLETON, door L. C., comes down, L. C.

MISS P. Brother, I would confer with you on a matter of moment.

POPPLE. I'm busy, sister; if you want to confer you must

confer by yourself—you would confer a great favour on me by holding your tongue.

MISS P. Brother, I apprehend my affairs are as important as any you can have on hand. Briefly, I purpose changing my condition. A gentleman has, with much assiduity, wooed and won me. Still, I thought, for form's sake, I would ask my elder brother's consent.

POPPLE. I don't know where your elder brother may be, but you have the hearty consent of your younger brother.

MISS P. Brother Peter, you're a puppy. I shall now introduce this gentleman, and trust that the unseemly garb he has donned may not prejudice him in the eyes of the other marriageable ladies of the family. *Exit, door L. C.*

SOPHY. (to POPPLETON) But, sir—Frederick—where is he? pray tell me.

POPPLE. You'll know directly.

Re-enter ARTHUR STANLEY, C.

ARTHUR. (R.) I must apologize, Mrs. Courthope, for lengthening my visit thus—but I've lost my rascal, Jack—my groom, and hanged if I can find out where he has hidden himself.

MRS. C. (*comes down R. C.*) It is well you are still here, Mr. Stanley, that you may congratulate Mr. Poppleton, who has found favour in the fastidious eyes of my niece.

ARTHUR. My dear Poppleton, I congratulate you with all my heart.

POPPLE. (*to him*) Hold your confounded tongue! you don't know what a horrid scrape I'm in.

SOPHY. (*aside to POPPLE.*) Sir, once for all, *will* you tell me where Frederick is?

POPPLE. (*from door in flat*) Where is he? Ah! You see that petticoated individual being dragged along the lawn by my sister?

SOPHY. Yes—yes!

POPPLE. Well that's your husband, and here he is!

Re-enter MISS POPPLETON, L. C., with JACK, who covers his face with a handkerchief.

SOPHY. (*aside*) Is it possible that he has descended to such grossness and vulgarity—Oh! Fred, Fred, how could you?

MISS P. Come along, young faint heart!

Enter MARY ANN, behind, L. C.

JACK. (*aside*) This old woman 'll be the death of me!

MARY A. (*aside*) I just want to know what they're up to with my Jack; I saw missis kidnap him in the hall.

MRS. C. Pray may I ask what this extraordinary mummerly is all about?

POPPLE. I can stand it no longer. *This is what it's all about, madam, your niece there is married!*

MRS. C. Married! Sophy! incredible!

SOPHY. True, aunt—pray—pray forgive me, I'll never be so naughty any more.

MRS. C. And who, and where is your husband?

SOPHY. I am ashamed, and grieved to find that he has so far forgotten himself as to appear before me in this mean and degrading masquerade—he is here! Frederick, you make me blush for you very early. (*crosses to L. C., throwing her arms round JACK'S neck*)

JACK. (*aside*) Here's a position! it's very nice, though—I shan't cry out!

MISS P. (C.) I would have you to know, miss, that this indelicate demonstration is misplaced; this gentleman is betrothed to *me*. Speak up and tell them so, like a man!

MARY A. (*unable to restrain herself*) And I would have you to know, miss, that I blush for *your* indelicacy, and I may add *impudence*—this young person happens to be *my* husband!

MRS. C. What on earth is the meaning of all this, *three* women claiming the same person, and that person a woman too?

MARY A. He isn't a woman, ma'am. Speak up, you great booby!

(*snatches handkerchief from JACK'S face; SOPHY on seeing her mistake screams and runs away*)

JACK. (*aside, taking cap off*) I wish the right owner would take and carry me off!

ARTHUR. Why, confound the fellow's insolence, it's my rascally groom, Jack Sharp!

MISS P. (*contemptuously*) Groom! may I ask? *Groom!* how dare you write to me on rose-coloured paper?

CHICORY. (*peeping in door, L. C.*) Mary Ann! Mary Ann!

POPPLE. Ha!

MARY A. (*to MISS POPPLETON*) *That's* the young man as wrote the letters, miss.

MISS P. (*to CHICORY*) Young man, come here! (*aside*) He's not so bad-looking after all.

CHICOR. Oh ma'am, I didn't mean 'em for——

MISS P. (*decisively*) Be silent and content, young man, I *will* marry you!

CHICORY *starts back aghast, and runs against POPPLETON, L., who raises his foot as usual to kick up, but stops short.*

POPPLE. No, poor devil, I haven't the heart to kick him now. Well, Mrs. Courthope, never mind who Sophy's husband is

or *where* he is—she *has* one—and I call upon you to fulfil your promise, and take one yourself.

MRS. C. I will, by redeeming an old promise—Arthur, my hand!

POPPLE. What! bamboozled at last—now——

MRS. C. You only exchange for a wife who *couldn't* love you, a *friend* who will love you dearly.

POPPLE. No, will you?

SOPHY. And so will I, *very* dearly.

MARY A. And so will I—ahem!

JACK. And so will I.

POPPLE. Well, well, perhaps it's as well as it is; I have had a great deal of trouble in hunting up husbands for somebody else, now I'd better begin to hunt up a wife for myself; however, as all my female connexions are provided for—even Susannah—I certainly can have no further reason to HUNT FOR A HUSBAND.

CHICK. MISS P. SOPHY. POPP. MRS. C. ARTHUR. MARY. JACK.
R. L.

Curtain.

Wooler (J. P.)

LAURENCE'S LOVE SUIT.

An Original Comedietta,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Love in Livery, A Man without a Head, Founded on Facts, A Twice Told Tale,
Sisterly Service, Did I Dream It? A Faint Heart which *did* Win Fair Lady,
Orange Blossoms, Old Phil's Birthday, Allow me to Apologize, I'll
Write to the "Times," Keep your Temper, Marriage at any
Price, Plots for Petticoats, The Silver Wedding, A
Hunt for a Husband, Maid of Honour, The Wilful
Ward, Two Heads better than One, &c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND LONDON.

LAURENCE'S LOVE SUIT.

First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre, (under the management of Mrs. Swanborough) on Monday, January 9th, 1865.

Characters.

DR. GRAYLOCK.....	Mr. H. J. TURNER.
LAURENCE VANE	Mr. PARSELLE.
PETER	Mr. T. THORNE.
MRS. MARKHAM	Mrs. MANDERS.
JULIET MARKHAM	Miss K. CARSON.
EVA CARLTON.....(<i>her Cousin</i>).....	Miss M. PALMER.
ROSE	Miss F. HUGHES.

ACT 1.—Scene—Mrs. Markham's Country Seat.

ACT 2.—Scene—L O N D O N.

TIME.—THE PRESENT.

COSTUMES.—MODERN.

Dr. GRAYLOCK.—*1st Act*: Black suit, white cravat, grey hair.
2nd Act: Brown travelling wrapper with hood, velvet waistcoat, heavy jewellery, dark trousers, polished boots with jean uppers, lavender gloves, black hair, moustache and beard.

All change after First Act.

TIME IN PERFORMANCE—1 HOUR 20 MINUTES.

LAURENCE'S LOVE SUIT.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Drawing Room in Mrs. Markham's house, elegantly furnished—folding doors at back, open—doors, R and L.*

ROSE and PETER discovered, arranging room.

ROSE. (R. C.) Peter, I declare you're quite a coward!

PETER. (L. C.) That's a fib, Miss Rose—to put it mildly. I don't mind giving you the benefit of my taste in arranging the room, but you're sure missus won't come, nor Miss Juliet?

ROSE. Oh, quite! missus is shut up in the library with Dr. Graylock, and I've just left Miss Juliet with her French maid, and her hair all over her shoulders, so she's safe for an hour at least.

PETER. What the deuce do they want French maids for an English head of hair for? ain't a British female's fingers good enough?

ROSE. It doesn't seem like it, and yet they're good enough for Miss Eva's; not that I want to dress her fine stuck-up cousin! not I!

PETER. She wants a dressing of some sort, but what a nice girl she is!

ROSE. She's a dear, as gentle and civil and modest as Miss Juliet is proud and bold and overbearing.

PETER. And yet see how missus treats her! why I've heard her speak to her as if she was a servant, or worse.

ROSE. Yes, Peter, it's a burning shame! but then you see poor Miss Eva is an orphan, and Mrs. Markham has brought her up, and she looks upon her as dependant upon her charity, but then as she's her niece and folks treat her as an equal of Miss Juliet, missus' temper gets soured.

PETER. Equal of Miss Juliet! she's worth twenty of her, and she's a precious deal prettier!

ROSE. That's a matter of taste. Miss Juliet's very handsome.

PETER. So's Miss Eva!—I won't hear Miss Eva run down!

ROSE. No one in this house will run her down, Peter, except

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those who should love her best—missus and Miss Juliet, Everybody else loves her dearly—Dr. Graylock, Mr. Laurence, and I——

PETER. And I— didn't she look beautiful the other day, when Mr. Laurence came of age? I saw her in the hall, dressed for the party, and oh; shouldn't I have liked to kiss her!

ROSE. Peter!

PETER. I should, whether you believe it or not. Now I never wanted to kiss Miss Juliet, therefore, of course Miss Eva's the prettiest.

ROSE. Well, it's nothing to you which is the prettiest. I am quite pretty enough for you!

PETER. Of course you are—bless you—if you weren't I wouldn't marry you, but I *should* like to ki——

ROSE. Hush!—there's some one coming; it's missus and the Doctor! Leave it to me and hold your tongue.

Enter MRS. MARKHAM and DR. GRAYLOCK, C. from L.

That'll do, Peter—I'll give them to Miss Eva.

MRS. M. What is it, Rose?

ROSE. Oh, Peter brought up these flowers for Miss Eva, ma'am, for her painting.

MRS. M. Then let them be taken up stairs to the study at once; and Peter, never bring any mess of flowers into the drawing room again.

PETER. No, ma'am—then I'll take these away too. (*taking other bouquet*) Miss Juliet told me to put 'em here.

MRS. M. Let them remain—if Miss Juliet told you to put them here it's a very different matter—you can leave the room.

ROSE. (*aside to PETER*) Come along.

PETER (*to ROSE*) You see, Miss Juliet's everybody—Miss Eva nobody—Missus is a brute—to put it mildly.

Exit ROSE and PETER, R.

DR. G. I wish, my dear madam, you would not draw these marked distinctions between the young ladies in the servants' presence; it is extremely ill-judged, and calculated to lower both Eva and yourself.

MRS. M. Pooh, nonsense, doctor! is there to be no distinction between a daughter and a dependant? Eva must be taught betimes to understand the position she will be shortly obliged to hold; for of course when Juliet marries Mr. Vane, I shall surrender my house to them, becoming myself only a guest, and it will be highly imprudent for Eva to remain at all.

DR. G. What is she to do then?

MRS. M. Do, doctor? what other portionless girls are compelled to do—go out as governess or something. I'm sure I've

given her a sufficient education—unless, as she has fifty pounds a year of her own, she may choose to live independantly.

DR. G. It is evil and unwomanly, madam, to mock at misfortune—let us change the subject. (*aside*) Poor dear Eva! ah, if Laurence could but see with my eyes!

MRS. M. With pleasure; let us resume that we were interrupted in. You will consent to keep Laurence in ignorance of his real position until he has formally proposed to Juliet?

DR. G. It goes somewhat against my conscience to do so—a trust should be faithfully and literally fulfilled; and as my poor old friend Vane chose that Laurence should be kept in ignorance of the large fortune he would have until he reached the age of twenty-five, I strictly forbore even hinting the matter to him; but he has now reached that age, and as it was my duty till now to conceal, it is my duty now to reveal it.

MRS. M. Certainly; but a day or two *cannot* signify, and I feel certain he will propose for Juliet at once—I expect it every hour, and I am naturally anxious that all sordid questions of money should be utterly overlooked in the match, and that love should be the only bond of attraction between them.

DR. G. Is Juliet aware of his being the possessor of this five thousand a year?

MRS. M. My dear doctor, how can you ask such a question? from the hour of Mr. Vane's death, my poor husband's partner, when he bequeathed his young son to my care, with the stipulation that you should superintend his education, you whom he could so well trust, and who have so nobly repaid that trust by sacrificing your life to his interest, from that hour the secret of his real position has never escaped my lips; he still believes himself only the possessor of the five hundred a year, the sum fixed upon for his use until his majority; and all I ask of you is that he may remain in that belief at least for a week longer.

DR. G. For a week! be it so—I consent, chiefly because I believe he loves Juliet and Juliet him, and that there is no interested motive on either side, still, at the expiration of that time I shall feel bound to discover all.

MRS. M. Certainly!

DR. G. Even if he should not have proposed for Juliet?

MRS. M. Yes; but to put your mind at ease on that point, I have a shrewd suspicion that he intends to propose for her this very day.

DR. G. Indeed! on what is this shrewd suspicion founded?

MRS. M. On the fact of his having this morning asked me for five minutes' private conversation; I bade him speak at once, as we were alone, but he refused, saying that Eva was waiting for him, he having promised to walk to the village with her. I guessed his object, and you may imagine I was

somewhat mortified to find that he considered Eva's waiting of more importance than the interview he desired of me—that girl is always in the way. However, he merely said “at twelve then, in the drawing room, may I depend upon you?” and no sooner had I replied “yes,” than he was off like an arrow.

DR. G. Well, I imagine he can have but one object in view by this desired private conversation.

MRS. M. Of course not, so you see the seal may possibly be removed from your lips to-morrow.

DR. G. I hope so, it's a load I shall be well pleased to remove from my conscience. Hark! I hear his voice, he is coming this way.

MRS. M. Then I will leave you, as our hour of meeting has not yet arrived—should he mention the subject to you, you know my sentiments and need not scruple to allude to them.

Exit, R.

DR. G. That woman's love for her daughter has expelled every other feeling from her breast, apparently: my heart bleeds to see the harshness with which she sometimes treats that dear uncomplaining girl, Eva. Ah! if Laurence had only——

Enter LAURENCE VANE, L.—they shake hands.

LAUR. Well, Doctor, I am glad to find you alone, I wished to have a few minutes talk with you.

DR. G. At your good pleasure, my dear Laurence.

LAUR. I feel not only disposed, but in a manner bound to take your opinion and to ask your sanction on any step I feel disposed to take, as I look upon you—have I not the best reason to do so?—in the light of a father.

DR. G. My dear boy, believe me I feel the affection of one towards you.

LAUR. I know it; well then, I am now of age, and though I think you will admit I have not wasted much time, and thanks to your instruction I am as well educated as a man need be, still it is necessary with my limited income that I should devote myself to some profession.

DR. G. (*aside*) Oh, my rash promise! (*aloud*) Yes, my dear Laurence, we will talk of that another time!

LAUR. No, no, now! two of the most important steps of my life will be taken to-day.

DR. G. Two?

LAUR. Yes! the choice of a profession, and a wife—in the selection of the former, my dear Doctor, I am anxious to consult you—in that of the latter I have already determined for myself.

DR. G. Ah! and who is the lady, pray?

LAUR. That you shall know in an hour or so—I am not in a position to name her yet, as my suit may be rejected.

DR. G. Shall I guess?

LAUR. No! and yet you of course could soon do it. You know I have been brought up with two very charming girls, and it would need no conjuror to guess that it is one of them.

DR. G. I am aware of it, my dear Laurence, and I think I could name the one.

LAUR. Possibly; and yet I thought I had played my cards so well that a looker-on could never have guessed my game—but it is not yet won.

DR. G. I think you may be at ease, Laurence—in fact, I may go so far as to say that I am sure the party in whose hands the decision rests will give it in your favour.

LAUR. You allude to Mrs. Markham.

DR. G. I do—she is very clear-sighted—has long noticed your attachment; and you may believe me when I say it meets with her warmest approval.

LAUR. My dear Doctor, you delight me, for I must confess to having had some doubts and misgivings on the matter myself. But now to the other part of my intentions—I propose, with your approval, to enter one of the Inns of Court, study hard, and in three years behold I shall have a profession, and surely I can manage to make two or three hundred a year by it.

DR. G. (*aside*) Poor boy! and I can't tell him he's got thousands.

LAUR. You are silent! oh, don't be alarmed, nor think I will be idle. Shall I not have the dearest and most sacred inducement to work? Shall I not have the happiness of my wife to provide for? and shall I not have the richest reward in her love? Bless you, Doctor, the woollack itself seems a trifle to attain, with such incitements to lead me on!

DR. G. I do not doubt your industry, my dear boy, nor with your talent your complete success; nor do I think the adoption of an honourable profession incompatible with the position of a gentleman of fortune.

LAUR. Ha, ha, ha! gentleman of fortune!

DR. G. (*aside*) Dear me, this is very embarrassing. (*aloud*) I—I speak generally, my dear Laurence; every man should have a profession, whatever his means; it gives him a status—a position—a——

LAUR. Yes, Doctor, but that does not affect me—I want a profession for a livelihood.

DR. G. (*aside*) A livelihood! as if he couldn't live upon five thousand a year!

LAUR. Have I your sanction to this step, Doctor?

DR. G. Ahem! I will weigh the matter in my mind, Laurence, and answer you to-morrow morning.

LAUR. Very well, and should any objections to the course I propose occur to you, I know you will deal frankly with me and state them.

DR. G. Be assured of that, my dear Laurence. (*aside*) I shan't have a moment's ease till he knows all.

LAURENCE. Here come the ladies; I mustn't run away at once, but I should like to have seen Mrs. Markham before meeting them again, for you must know, Doctor——

DR. G. I know all about it, Laurence; you have requested a private interview with her here, at twelve o'clock.

LAUR. Ah! she told you.

DR. G. Yes; and be assured she will so arrange it as to have the course quite clear for you.

LAUR. Hush! (*they go up stage*)

Enter JULIET and EVA, R.—JULIET is dressed very richly, EVA plainly but with taste—they do not notice LAURENCE and DR. GRAYLOCK.

JULIET. I've no patience with such a parade of charity—nor do I believe exactly in your alleged motive for the walk.

EVA. Indeed, Juliet, you may believe me, but I am very sorry to have displeased you, and had I thought that Laurence's accompanying me would have done so——

JULIET. Ha, ha! that's extremely good. What care I whom Laurence accompanies, where he goes, or what he does!

DR. G. (*aside to LAURENCE*) A slight breeze stirring; however, I'll leave you to appease the storm, whilst I slip out to tell Mrs. Markham how anxiously you will await her—at twelve. *Exit, R.*

EVA. You are not angry with me then, Juliet?

JULIET. (*pettishly*) Not I, indeed.

EVA. Nor with Laurence?

LAUR. (*advancing*) I'll answer for that. Why, Juliet, what's amiss?

JULIET. Nothing, sir; I was merely expostulating with Eva on the folly of toiling down to that dirty village.

EVA. It was no toil, Juliet.

LAUR. We had a very lovely walk, had we not, Eva; besides we went to comfort poor old Widow Martin, and see if she required anything.

JULIET. I think if people want charity, the least they can do is to come for it.

EVA. (*gently*) You forget, Juliet dear, she is bed-ridden.

JULIET. Oh! well, then you could have sent her some money

or what she wanted by the servant, as I do. I'm sure I never hesitate to assist the poor people.

EVA. No, dear; but it is the compassionate look, and the kind words, that these poor creatures are more grateful for even than for the assistance.

LAUR. Aye, indeed, Juliet; if you had seen the grateful tears on the poor old creature's cheeks——

JULIET. Thank goodness, I didn't! I don't like scenes——

EVA. Oh, cousin!

LAUR. Come, come, Juliet; you do not mean what you say——something has ruffled your temper this morning.

JULIET. That is an impertinence, Mr. Vane.

LAUR. No, it is not; so, I am now sure you are out of temper, if you call me Mr. Vane. If I did not love you so much, that would be enough to put me out of temper, too; but come, Juliet, call me Laurence, and give me your hand, and let us forget all this nonsense.

JULIET. Willingly, dear Laurence. (*gives her hand*) But Eva knew that I wanted you to ride over to Springfield with me, and I was naturally a little vexed when I found she had taken you elsewhere.

EVA. Why, Juliet, I asked you if you were going to Springfield, and you said no, your head ached.

JULIET. Yes, when I saw Laurence on the lawn ready to accompany you.

LAUR. You are wrong, my pretty Juliet—I had just ordered the horses round, when I sent Eva to ask you if you were ready, and finding that you declined going, I was only too glad of a companion for a walk. (*aside—looking at his watch*) only a *quarter* to twelve! I must leave Mrs. Markham time to get rid of the girls. (*aloud*) I have a couple of letters to write, and I cannot choose a better time than when there is a slight cloud on my dear Juliet's brow—I know it will clear off long before I have finished them—so farewell, ladies, for the present—after luncheon we will have a pleasant ride together, and you shall have the direction of it, Juliet, to make amends for your disappointment this morning—so again, dears, farewell for an hour.

Exit, L.

EVA. You are not angry with me, Juliet?

JULIET. I said just now that I was not, I believe; what more would you wish?

EVA. Nothing but the least little smile to assure me of it.

JULIET. Oh, I thought you might want an apology perhaps for what I have said.

EVA. You are very unkind, Juliet—you have said nothing—it was all my fault, and I am very sorry that I took Laurence into the village at all.

JULIET. It's all nonsense—let us talk no more about it.

Re-enter MRS. MARKHAM, R.

MRS. M. Now, girls, girls, what are you idling here for? Juliet, have you had your harp practice this morning?

JULIET. No, mamma; and in addition, I do not intend to have it.

MRS. M. Nay, my dear, do as you like, of course; and you, Eva—is that ottoman embroidery done yet?

EVA. No, aunt, I have not worked at it this morning, I have been with Laurence to the village.

MRS. M. Dear me, what a strange thing it is that girls will go gadding about wasting their time in idleness and chattering instead of trying to make themselves useful, mind, I shall expect it finished to-day.

EVA. (*cheerfully*) I will go and work at it once, aunt, and I promise you I will finish it to-day. *Exit, R.*

MRS. M. Now, Juliet, go away at once, somewhere, I expect Laurence here directly on a little matter concerning you, you sly puss.

JULIET. I know of no matter in which Laurence——

MRS. M. Oh, no! it would not be proper for you to know, or at least highly improper to admit it if you did; but go at once, he will be here directly.

JULIET. Very well, mamma, I can have no possible desire to interrupt your interview, whatever its nature may be.

Exit languidly, R.

MRS. M. At last, then, the hour has arrived for the consummation of my dearest hopes. I shall see my darling Juliet affianced to an admirable young man, who has five thousand a year. What can a mother desire more for a child—he is handsome, accomplished, spotless in character, in disposition liberal, and as I before remarked, has five thousand a year. I have only to think now of some method of getting rid of Eva with decency, for get rid of her I must and will—Hem!

Re-enter LAURENCE, L.

Well, Laurence, you see I am punctual.

LAUR. You are kind and considerate, dear madam, as you ever are. (*places chair*)

MRS. M. (*sitting*) And now, what is this important secret, my dear Laurence?

LAUR. You may say secret with truth, madam, for I believe I have discovered the grand secret, namely, the means of attaining life-long happiness, and yet its attainment will depend mainly upon you.

MRS. M. Be assured then, my dear boy, that your happiness is certain.

LAUR. And yet it seems the height of assurance, after the manifold favors I have received at your hands, to ask another, incomparably the greatest you have granted or could grant.

MRS. M. Be at ease, Laurence; it must indeed be a great favour, if it be greater than your merits deserve, or my love can grant; so speak freely.

LAUR. You know that from childhood I have been blessed with the society of the two dearest girls in England! I long loved them both as sisters, but of late I have found out that I love one better than a sister!

MRS. M. Well, Laurence, that is but natural.

LAUR. And therefore I ventured to hope I might induce that one to become my wife.

MRS. M. And have succeeded, I apprehend.

LAUR. I trust so, madam; I ought perhaps to have obtained your sanction before I made the attempt.

MRS. M. You were pretty easy on that head, I fancy, Mr. Slyboots!

LAUR. I confess, madam, I did not look for any serious opposition, but when I considered my position, with but a poor five hundred a year, I feared you might consider my seeking a wife, a little premature.

MRS. M. (*aside*) I really fear I can't resist telling him all; the offer's as good as made, and it will look so frank and confiding.

LAUR. You are silent, madam; was I right in thinking that that consideration would make you hesitate?

MRS. M. Oh, no, no, Laurence! were you without any other possession than your merit I would cheerfully give my consent, but there's a little secret I must whisper to you; you are not so poor as you fancy. I must say no more. Dr. Graylock will give you all details, but you are master of a very pretty fortune!

LAUR. You surprise me, madam, but I rejoice at the news for the dear sake of her whose lot I look to link with mine; for myself I covet nothing beyond her love, but were I master of a prince's revenue I would gladly lay it all down at the feet of my darling Eva!

MRS. M. Eva!

LAUR. Yes, madam! Why this astonishment? It is Eva I love—Eva I ask for! Did you not understand me?

MRS. M. No, sir! and if I understand you now, be sure you shall never have my consent to marrying that artful designing girl.

LAUR. Madam, if I have incurred your displeasure—though,

wherefore, I am at a loss to guess—do not include in that displeasure one whose innocence of offence is as great as my ignorance of it. Eva is——

MRS. M. I will not hear her name, sir! You and she have conspired to insult me, and to humiliate my daughter.

LAUR. At least, madam, let me understand the charge against me. As I live, I am in utter ignorance of your meaning.

MRS. M. Oh, well-assumed, sir!—do you deny that you have striven, by your behaviour, to induce the belief that you were attached to my daughter?

LAUR. If my behaviour could have borne the interpretation of anything beyond the most sincere and brotherly attachment to Miss Markham——

MRS. M. Absurd! the whole household—Dr. Graylock and myself have remarked it; and now it seems you used her only as a cloak to conceal your real intentions upon that cunning girl, Eva?

LAUR. Madam, you distress as much you surprise me, by this language! I have always treated Miss Markham, I trust, with profound respect; and, indeed, any one who treated her otherwise should dearly account for it to me!

MRS. M. Words—words. But I have been rightly served! By treating a dependent as my own child, the serpent I have warmed has turned and stung me! As for you, sir, I can wish you no worse fate than your conduct and choice of a wife will inevitably entail upon you, but for that girl—I will go a quick way to work with her. *Exit, R.*

LAUR. But, madam—gone—I am amazed! what can have brought about this fatal misunderstanding? I have never surely given Juliet any reason to think herself the object of my advances. It is true I have been guarded in my addresses to Eva, but the poor girl was so timid and so fearful of being the object of notice, perhaps of ridicule, that I did so in deference to her feelings. But this outburst of Mrs. Markham's is——Ha! doctor, you never came more seasonably.

Enter DR. GRAYLOCK, L.

DR. G. Why, what now?

LAUR. Oh, the most disastrous misadventure! You know I proposed asking Mrs. Markham for permission to marry the woman I had chosen.

DR. G. Well, you don't mean to say she refused you her daughter's hand?

LAUR. Confound it, doctor! are you too possessed with that ridiculous misconception? I didn't want her daughter, and didn't ask for her daughter; it was Eva whom I——

DR. G. (*seizing his hand*) Eva! my dear Laurence, I am

delighted! (*altering tone*) I'm very sorry—you have done a very rash thing.

LAUR. Rash! to woo a dear, virtuous girl? to win her, and ask for her?

DR. G. But do you not see that you have made two implacable enemies?

LAUR. But how, in the name of patience? I never gave Juliet any grounds for believing I loved her.

DR. G. Possibly; but it was taken for granted. Mrs. Markham never dreamt of Eva's being preferred to her cousin, and the disappointment is proportionately heavy; besides, I must tell you now that your position is not such as you believe.

LAUR. Mrs. Markham dropped a hint to that effect; tell me what are my prospects.

DR. G. Prospects—your present possessions you mean—your father very wisely ordered that you were to be kept in ignorance of the fortune you were heir to, in order that you might not waste your minority, but apply it to such studies as you fancied were to procure you a livelihood; you are, master, Laurence, of five thousand a-year.

LAUR. Ha!.

DR. G. So you see—Mrs. Markham is naturally vexed at missing such a position for her daughter.

LAUR. Surely, she has no such mercenary ideas?

DR. G. All mothers are mercenary, more or less.

LAUR. I care not for the money; with Eva for my wife, I should be content with the sum I have already had—with what my own profession would bring me—hark ye, Doctor, Eva shall be my wife, in spite of all opposition, let it come from what quarter it may.

DR. G. Eva is a gentle good girl, and upon my word, I can hardly blame you—but, hark! surely some one is sobbing close at hand. (*goes to door*) It is Eva herself!

LAUR. Leave us, Doctor, will you, for a short time?

DR. G. Willingly; I never could bear to see a woman crying.

Exit, L.

Enter EVA, R.

LAUR. Dear Eva, what has distressed you in this manner?

EVA. Oh, Laurence! Mrs. Markham has been saying the most unkind, unjust, and cruel things to me—charging me with deceit, ingratitude, and all other unutterable baseness.

LAUR. Never heed her, dear; she has been labouring under strange misapprehension, and in her sudden recovery from it, utters unconsidered words, which she will be sorry for to-morrow.

EVA. Laurence, in one charge she was correct—we have been guilty of deceit, by concealing our love.

LAUR. A deceit that wronged no one—concerned no one, and therefore an innocent deceit. But never mind, we will go to Mrs. Markham very penitently to-morrow, and my word on it she forgives us.

EVA. To-morrow, Laurence, I shall be far, far from here.

LAUR. Eva!

EVA. It must be so, dear Laurence; after the words my aunt spoke to me, I cannot pass another night beneath her roof, if indeed she would permit me.

LAUR. Why, what on earth do you mean, Eva?

EVA. What I say, Laurence. Mrs. Markham so clearly made me understand that I had outstaid my welcome—that within an hour I quit this house for ever.

LAUR. Dear Eva, is not this a rash resolve? We have received so much kindness from Mrs. Markham, that I could forgive her this outbreak. But it shall be as you wish—I will secure a place for you, till we are married, and then—

EVA. Oh, Laurence, forget that you ever asked me to be your wife—forget that I ever promised to become so—it can never be!

LAUR. Eva, are you crazed?

EVA. No, Laurence, sane and sad enough; but I owe too much to my aunt for the past to put my own feelings in comparison with her happiness for the future.

LAUR. Oh, Eva, but my happiness, is that nothing to you?

EVA. Laurence, you know how dear you are to me—heaven and myself only know the pain I suffer in parting from you—but my duty is so clear—

LAUR. Eva! Eva! talk not of your duty; is it your duty to thus throw away your own happiness and darken all my future because of a silly misapprehension and a few bitter words spoken on account of it.

EVA. It would seem not, indeed; but I feel that as I have been the cause of so much distress to one who has ever treated me with so much goodness, me, a penniless orphan—

LAUR. Penniless, Eva, no longer, if you will but share my fortune! I am rich, rich beyond—

EVA. I know it, Laurence, and perhaps it is not all duty that urges me on; pride may have its wicked part in it. Mrs. Markham taunted me with the fact, hinting that I heard it, or had guessed it, and had schemed to win a wealthy husband! Oh, Laurence, it is so bitter, I cannot bear it.

LAUR. You know it to be false, Eva!

EVA. I do, but others will not; no, no, Laurence, my heart may break, or time may heal it, I know not which, but my course is taken; I must leave you, and for ever!

LAUR. Eva! Eva!

EVA. Do not make my pain greater by shewing me your own, dear Laurence; the last favour I will ask you is to give this letter to my aunt, confessing my fault for having in secret encouraged your love, and begging her to pardon one she will never see again; and now, Laurence, farewell; may you be happy with some happier girl than I!

LAUR. Oh, Eva! will nothing move you?

EVA. If your first entreaty could not, all the world could not! good-bye, Laurence!

LAUR. At least tell me where you are going.

EVA. To what end? but I will tell you—to London—beyond that, I know no more than you.

LAUR. Then let me go with you.

EVA. Oh, Laurence! can you ask that?

LAUR. No—no—but dearest, dearest Eva! I cannot part with you!

EVA. (*aside*) If this scene is prolonged my courage will give way. (*aloud*) Laurence! Laurence! it must be so! Forget me—dear, dear Laurence, once more—farewell for ever!

Exit, C. to L.

LAUR. Eva, stay!—wretched girl, she is gone, and to what a fate! Alone—moneyless—friendless, to London. That bitter woman has driven her mad! She must be mad to take such a step. What can I do? for something I will do! Oh, doctor—

Re-enter DR. GRAYLOCK, R.

Doctor, Eva has gone!

DR. G. Gone! what do you mean by gone?

LAUR. She has been stung beyond endurance, by the taunts of Mrs. Markham, and has left the house for ever. She has renounced me and the wealth I offered her. Oh! Doctor, advise me! She has gone to London—can she be left alone in that vile pest-house? She so innocent—so inexperienced. Impossible—no, come what may, under no circumstances will I abandon her! I will follow her—I—

DR. G. Laurence, pause—you asked my advice.

LAUR. I did, but I need it not now. I have taken my own course—I follow her—I cannot bear to meet Mrs. Markham again, but I would not quit her without a word—stay, dear doctor, one moment—(*goes to table and writes*)

DR. G. (*aside*). Poor lad,—but he has love's lunacy upon him, and it's very little use arguing with a madman. The girl shews a fine spirit—I wonder she hasn't been driven to it before, but I—

LAUR. (*folding letter*) Doctor, be kind as you have ever been—do not seek to stay my purpose, for even *your* influence would fail—give these two letters—Eva's and my own—to

Mrs. Markham—you shall hear from me soon—but now, best of friends, not a word—but good-bye, and say fortune speed me.

DR. G. (*taking letters*) As you will—headstrong—good-bye and fortune speed you!

LAUR. My excellent friend, be sure, whatever befalls, you shall never have cause to blush for your pupil! *Exit, C. to L.*

DR. G. Ahem! one after the other—that will make two lunatics going to London—one equally as inexperienced as the other. Do I keep the solemn promise I made his father, to let him launch himself upon the tempestuous waves of London, without a pilot? No, no; he has been my only care hitherto, he must be my only care still—and so—my good Mrs. Markham, (*sits at table and writes*) with—all sorts of grateful remembrances of your hospitality and kindness, I shall even follow, and make a third in this precious flight of fools. (*folding letter*) There is my letter of excuse and farewell—at least for the present. (*rings*) I can easily keep an eye upon him, even if I choose to keep myself aloof.

Enter ROSE, R.

ROSE. Did you ring, Doctor?

DR. G. Yes, Rose; I'm going on a little journey. Miss Eva has taken her departure for London.

ROSE. La, sir!

DR. G. Yes, and Mr. Vane after her. I have my own reasons for following them, so be good enough to give these three letters to Mrs. Markham, and say I shall write her again soon. *Exit, C. to L.*

ROSE. (*with letters in her hand*) Good gracious! that dear Miss Eva gone to London—and without me! Why what on earth will the poor child do? well, I can't say; but I know very well what I shall do—and that is, set off after her as fast as my legs will carry me—as for missis—oh, I don't care about my wages—I shall just give her warning at once. (*sits and writes*) She won't like my scrawl I daresay, but I can't help that. She'll be very glad to keep the three pound ten she owes me—and I'm not without a pound either—then—(*goes to door*) Peter! Peter I say! Peter!

Enter PETER, R.

PETER. What are you shouting out "Peter" in that way for?

ROSE. Because I want him, booby; here, just you give these four letters to Mrs. Markham.

PETER. Can't you give 'em her yourself?

ROSE. No, I can't; because I'm off to London.

PETER. What!

ROSE. Oh, don't stand staring at me in that way! Miss

Eva's been and run away—I ain't going to let her go and get torn to pieces by wild beasts in London, and I don't care for no missuses—nor no nothing——

PETER. Well, but there's *me*, Rose!

ROSE. Oh! I'll attend to you when I've found Miss Eva, and brought her back; so give those letters to Mrs. Markham, and then— (*gives him a kiss*) Good-bye, Peter!

Runs off, C. to L.

PETER. (*bewildered, looking off after ROSE, and then at the four letters*) Well, I am bothered; here's a pretty go—what's it all supposed to be about—what's Miss Eva done, that she's to be torn to pieces by wild beasts up in London? I'm very sorry for her; but she don't belong to me. Now Rose *does*—and, perhaps, when the wild beasts have devoured Miss Eva, they'll take a fancy to her. Oh, hang it! that won't do—I shall go and look after my own property; so I shall just tip missus a bit of paper. (*sits at table, and takes up pen and writes*) “Missus—no, missus won't do, it ain't genteel—“Mrs. Mar”—how the deuce does she spell her name? “M-a-r-c-u-m,”—that's it—“this comes, a wishing you in good”—e-l-t-h—“elth, and sorry as it don't leave me the same. My”—fis—fis—how the dickens do they spell physician!—never mind, doctor'll do—“my doctor recommends me a change of air, and I am a-going to try the atmo-s-f-e-r-e”—there I've been and left out the *h*—that's it—“the hatmosphere of London, and remain”—no, that won't do—I *don't* remain—“and go away. Your humble footman to command—Peter.” There. (*folds letter*) Now, where's a wafer? Oh! I see it's one of these sticking antelopes—that's it. Now, one, two, three, four, five letters for Mrs. Markham—you may all lie there; (*throws them on table*) and anybody as likes may give 'em to her. I'm off for London!

Exit C. to L.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—*A Room in Laurence's House.*

Enter PETER, R. and ROSE, L.

PETER. Rose!

ROSE. Peter! (*they rush into each other's arms*) Oh, Peter! how glad I am to see you once more.

PETER. Hold me tight, Rose, or I shall faint.

ROSE. Whoever would have thought of finding you here?

PETER. And who would have thought of seeing *you?* and now I reflect, I must ask you what you are doing here? as my master's house is none of the nicest of places for a moral young female.

ROSE. Oh, I've brought a note from Mrs. Markham, that was, (she's married again now) for Mr. Vane, to say we are in town again.

PETER. Ah, I dare say Mr. Vane doesn't care much about that. But oh, Rose, if you knew the dodges I was up to find you: for nearly twelve months, first of all, I wandered about from morning till night—that I soon found out wouldn't pay, so I went into a baker's—

ROSE. A baker's!

PETER. Yes, don't you see? wheeled the truck out. I thought perhaps you might be in my beat—and I know young women are fond of looking after bakers.

ROSE. Nonsense!

PETER. Well, it *was* nonsense; so I took a turn in the chimney-sweeping line.

ROSE. What?

PETER. Fact! because you see, the sweep's called inside, where the baker's kept outside, so I had a double chance—no go again; so I washed my face, and turned acrobat.

ROSE. What, for gracious sake's, acrobat?

PETER. You know—fellows in spangles and a pink ribbon round their head, who get on long poles!

ROSE. And what, in patience's name, did you do that for—it's a mercy you didn't break your silly neck!

PETER. I didn't you see, because we went all over London, and when on the long pole I could see into all the first-floor windows.

ROSE. Ah, true!

PETER. I think I looked into some two or three thousand first-floor windows, but it was no use. I tried a dozen things after that: I had a costermonger's cart so as I could hollo out about the greens and things, and I thought you might recognize my voice—but you didn't.

ROSE. Not likely, considering I never heard it.

PETER. At last I gave it up—all my money was gone, and so I entered into Mr. Vane's service, and here I am.

ROSE. Poor young fellow! And how is he?

PETER. Between you and me, Rose, he's no better than he should be. He kept up the search for Miss Eva for a few months, when all on a sudden he turned it up—took to all sorts of larks, backed by a racketty old Baron, who fleeces him, I think to a pretty tune.

ROSE. Good gracious—how shocking!

PETER. Well, he *has* been carrying on finely and no mistake. I fancy that when he found he couldn't get no tidings of Miss Eva he got reckless and went the full pace out of sheer agony of mind. But where have *you* been all the time?

ROSE. Oh, I searched for dear Miss Eva for six months, till I hadn't a penny in my pocket or a shoe to my foot; nobody would take me in that plight, so I went back to Mrs. Markham, chiefly because I might be more likely to hear of Miss Eva there. We returned to town yesterday, and—that's all.

PETER. No it isn't, I want another kiss.

ROSE. Take it: but I do wonder where poor dear Miss Eva is?

PETER. Ah! hush! here's the governor coming, and I don't want him to see you, as he's one of those wild beasts you talked about.

ROSE. You'll come and see me?

PETER. Rather!

ROSE. Good-bye then.

(*kiss and exit* ROSE, R.)

PETER. That is what I call a staggerer, to put it mildly; but it's very jolly all the same.

Enter LAURENCE, L., *fashionably dressed and rather excited, followed by* DR. GRAYLOCK, *disguised as the Baron Lavallo, he assumes a slight foreign accent.*

LAUR. No more preaching for mercy's sake, my dear Baron.

PETER. Letter for you, sir.

LAUR. Very well, Peter the Great, or Peter the Hermit, or Peter the Wild-boy, which you like—bring some champagne, the Baron's hand shakes this morning.

DR. G. Nay, my very dear friend—

LAUR. Well, mine does, it's all the same—go along Peter! (*Exit* PETER, L.) What's this all about? (*opens and reads*) Oh! from my precious Mrs. Markham that was. "Dear Laurence, we are in Town—come and see us. Ever, Laura Oldfield." Hem! I wish Oldfield joy of his Laura.

DR. G. Very fine woman Madame Oldfield.

LAUR. Very; but what's that to me, or you either? To go back to the preaching, I like, upon my soul, to hear you at it, when you and your two friends cleared me out of nearly a year's income last night.

DR. G. The luck of the cards—*mon cher*.

LAUR. And the devil's luck as well; but what do I care? the sooner I'm cleared out the better, and I can tell you my capital's pretty well dipped.

Re-enter PETER, L., *with champagne; he pours out.*

PETER. (*aside*) I wish it would choke that black-muzzled Frenchman.

Exit, L.

LAUR. You're a comical dog, Baron, upon my honour, and not so supernaturally good-looking. I don't know how the deuce I take to you, but there's something in your voice which reminds me of an old lost friend.

DR. G. Well, am I not a new found friend?

LAUR. Oh, a precious friend, you French Mephistopheles! you're leading me to the devil in a canter.

DR. G. Ah, you go in the willing canter; you use the cards and the—what you call—the dice a little too much. You lose two, three thousand pounds in one night.

LAUR. And you win them, so you have no reason to grumble. Hold your glass. (*fills both*)

DR. G. You shall pardon me, I only win my share.

LAUR. Well, there are two subordinate imps of Satan of your acquaintance who win the rest; but who cares? I wish every penny I have were gone. A pestilence on the accursed money! through that yellow devil gold, I lost the dearest hopes of my life—it has destroyed my past—is destroying my present, and *will* destroy my fut— No! it can't, for I shan't have any left! Now, man, you drink like a child at its own christening.

DR. G. Too much champagne, my friend, is hurtful to the nerves!

LAUR. Pshaw! where would the nerves be but for the champagne? You know my story. I wish to heaven I never had a shilling; then the girl I didn't want wouldn't have wanted me; and the girl I did want would have had me. So, drink, you demon Baron! here's double and treble confusion and perdition to gold and all its worshippers.

DR. G. Pardon me again, my friend, but I cannot drink to that, for I worship him a little myself.

LAUR. May your idol fall and crush you as it has me! Bah! I'm a peevish fool to prate thus; without money there would be no champagne, bright eyes and rosy lips, no jovial dinners, no roystering suppers, no wine, no women, no wassail; (*changing his tone*) and no broken hearts! (*in the previous reckless tone*) Eh, confound you, Baron, if you go on croaking in this way I shall have to cut you dead! come, more champagne, and the devil take all hearts, sound or broken!

DR. G. I will drink to that! I don't believe much in hearts.

LAUR. *Much!*—I don't believe in them at all! balloons inflated with a gas called self-love; who rise and fall, according to the lightness or heaviness of the atmosphere about them.

DR. G. That would be very good, if it were true—but it isn't true!

LAUR. *True!* what in this world of lies is true? is man true? is woman true?—honesty, faith, love, friendship—is there one spark of truth in any one of these mockeries?

DR. G. But, Mademoiselle Eva——

LAUR. (*fiercely*) 'Sdeath, man! have I not told you never to mention that name? Forgive me, Baron, I'm rather peevish to-day.

DR. G. Aha! as your poet says, "The course of true love never did run smooth."

LAUR. That depends whether it's the first, second, or third course. Baron, I've got a brilliant idea.

DR. G. I rejoice—for the novelty of the thing.

LAUR. Yes; what do you think? Hang and confound me, if I don't propose to Juliet Markham!

DR. G. (*starting*) Eh?

LAUR. What's the matter?

DR. G. (*aside*) Heaven forbid! I must prevent this.

LAUR. You don't want her yourself, by accident, do you?

DR. G. I! ha, ha! *ma foi*, no.

LAUR. Very well then; don't unsettle my nerves by starting in that way. Yes, I loved her once—I loved *two* girls, and it's quite clear to me I made choice of the wrong one. Oh, this revenge will be superb! (*rings, and sits at table to write*) By the bones of St. Benedict, I'll do it.

DR. G. (*aside*) What can be done to stop this reckless lad in this new instance of madness? Something I will do—for his own sake as well as for poor lost Eva's.

Enter PETER, L.

LAUR. Peter, take this note to Mrs.—what's her confounded new name? (*looks at her note*) Oh! Oldfield!

PETER. Ugh!

LAUR. You might have made that noise before you entered the room. Be off!

PETER. Ugh!

Exit, L.

LAUR. Come, there's a little excitement cut out for to-day, at all events.

DR. G. But are you sure mademoiselle will accept?

LAUR. Oh, bless you, yes! at least, I believe so; but deceit has so often cut the throat of confidence, that hang me if I know what to believe.

DR. G. Can you introduce me there?

LAUR. Well—of course; but I don't think either of the ladies play, and as for the General, he's always laid up with the gout.

DR. G. I do not want to play with the ladies.

LAUR. Oh, it's all right; you call for me when I've been there about an hour, then I can introduce you, and it will be an excuse to get away.

DR. G. When do you go?

LAUR. Oh, I shall be there in a quarter of an hour or so. I'm just going round to—to—deuce take it! my memory's very bad—oh, I know, to Stanley's, to arrange for our little quiet meeting this evening. You'll come?

DR. G. Oh yes; but mind you bring the notes with you.

LAUR. Never fear, I'll not be unprovided. I suppose I shall drop a thousand or two more to-night. Oh, by-the-bye, I must first call round on Laura, too.

DR. G. Ah, she is——

LAUR. What, you old puritan? She's a glorious girl! makes vows of most endearing fondness—promises of the most charming devotion; it's true there's one drawback, *she breaks them all*; but what's the odds? all women do the same—all alike! Come along, Mephistopheles. Let the earth go round, or stand still, it's all one to me—who cares? Come along.

Exeunt, L.

SCENE SECOND.—*Saloon in the House of Mrs. General Oldfield.*

Enter ROSE and PETER, L.

ROSE. Now you mustn't stop here a moment.

PETER. I don't want to stop here, nor there either.

ROSE. Where's there?

PETER. Where I am.

ROSE. Why you're here, stupid, not there.

PETER. Stupid yourself. To put it mildly, I mean in Mr. Vane's service—I don't like it—chimney-sweeping's a clean-gentlemanly business to it. I'm always taking letters to some horrid women or other—there's one for your missis! (*gives it*)

ROSE. Well I'm sure.

PETER. I tell you it sours my temper.

ROSE. Well, I must say you are in a shocking ill temper now!

PETER. Don't I say my temper's soured? and I cry out, that's all. An oyster isn't a noisy animal, but if anything would make him holloa it's throwing vinegar over him—souring his temper.

ROSE. You great silly! But is poor Laurence Vane really so bad?

PETER. No, he's a great deal worse. What with lots of money in his pocket, lots of champagne in his head, and Baron Blackbeard at his elbow, he's going slick away by express to blazes.

ROSE. I'm very sorry—what would poor dear Miss Eva say?

PETER. Say! why she'd say exactly as I say, that he's a damn—ahem!—a confounded idiot, but he's got a worse sin

to answer for than sending letters to women—drinking champagne and gambling with wide-awake Barons.

ROSE. Is it possible—what can be worse?

PETER. Listen and shudder! he's very fast—corrupting my morals.

ROSE. Peter!

PETER. Fact, as I'm a tiger! why, only last night I drank five glasses of brandy and water at the "Bell," kissed the barmaid, and lost half-a-crown at cribbage.

ROSE. I never heard of such abominable depravity in my life.

PETER. Never mind. You look very fresh this morning.

ROSE. Yes, about as fresh as you were last night. I was going to take you into the kitchen and give you some lunch—but I shan't now—get along, do!

PETER. Only to take the taste of the barmaid off my lips.
(*kisses her*)

ROSE. There goes all my hair; come along, you great bear, do!

PETER. You see, I know the way to bring a pretty girl round.
Exeunt, R.

Enter FOOTMAN, L., with EVA, plainly but tastefully dressed—she has a box of patterns.

FOOTMAN. Mrs. Oldfield wishes you to wait here, miss.

EVA. Very well. *Exit FOOTMAN, L.*

I do so dislike coming to these grand houses; I wish they would send some of the other girls, I have been unused to them so long, and they bring back memories I would willingly forget—amongst others the memory of Laurence, as he was, alas, not as he is, for I hear terrible reports of him from girls at our place who see a little more of the world than I do. Well, I am very happy, now, and would not change my own quiet little room for all this gold and glitter; he would be happier too, I think, if he were not so rich, but he will find by and bye that the rattle of twenty thousand gold pieces cannot drown the voice of conscience. I hope Mrs. Oldfield will not keep me waiting, as I am so busy. (*opens box, arranging articles as LAURENCE enters, L., she has her back towards him*)

LAUR. Dressing! bother, women are always dressing. Ah! there's a pretty figure, anyhow—a milliner, too; with all my heart I'm very fond of milliners. I'll try and get a little entertainment out of her. (*approaches her unperceived, and places his arm round her waist*) Well! my pretty dear! (*she starts round and recognizes him with a cry—he starts back*) Eva! (*she covers her eyes*) Here and thus! Silent! Eva! have you forgotten me?

EVA. (*recovering*) Have you not rather forgotten yourself?

LAUR. I have been dreaming for many months—I am awake now—and you——

EVA. Do not awake for me, Mr. Vane; dream on, and dream of better things.

LAUR. This is hardly the reception I looked for when we met, Eva.

EVA. You best know the reception you merit, sir; please to let me pass—I little thought to meet you here; it was a cruel chance that threw you across my path.

LAUR. By heaven, you do not. What mean these harsh and bitter words? have you forgotten all the past?

EVA. I have forgotten nothing.

LAUR. Then why this strange coldness?

EVA. Because I *remember* the past! Oh, Laurence, if you ever loved me, leave me. I am happy—contented; our farewell was spoken many months since. I will not say it did not pain me bitterly, but it is past and irrevocable.

LAUR. Eva, are you mad? (*aside*) Pest on that wine—I don't know what to say. (*aloud*) How is it I see you here, in this capacity?

EVA. I do not blush at it—it is honest. I earn my living—I am beholden to none. I am thankful and at rest. Oh! let me go.

LAUR. Eva, dear Eva! I again offer you my home, my hand and heart.

EVA. Laurence Vane, our positions are now as they were then—you are rich and prosperous, I poor and struggling—I can bear my own lot, I could not bear to link yours to it.

LAUR. Psha! are you not all that man could wish—beautiful, amiable, accomplished——

EVA. And a beggar!

LAUR. I will raise you to my position.

EVA. The world would say I brought you down to *mine*—no! once more farewell, if I were seen here with you—I implore you to let me go!

LAUR. Never! but with me!

EVA. (*aside*) Let my heart bleed as it may, *he* shall not be sacrificed—and there is but one way! (*aloud*) Would you have me speak more plainly?

LAUR. Yes! to be understood!

EVA. Hear then! I refused you once with bitter sorrow—I refuse you now with bitterer shame.

LAUR. Shame?

EVA. Aye, shame! ask me not *how*, but I have heard of your evil courses, your recklessness, and your riot—your wicked and shameless life.

LAUR. Enough, Miss Carleton, if you make my indiscretions, the result of my despair at not finding you, a pretext for this conduct——

EVA. Finding *me*? Did you think to find me in the haunts of sin—in tawdry saloons—in theatre lobbies and in gambling houses?

LAUR. By heaven! this is too much!

EVA. Indeed it is; you may wonder how I knew it, but you cannot deny it—once more, let me pass!

LAUR. You will find my pride, madam, equal to your own. You have scorned—humiliated me—but it is for the last time—pass on!

EVA. (*aside*) Oh, this is very bitter! (*aloud, timidly*) Laurence!

LAUR. (*coolly*) Miss Carleton!

EVA. Before we part, will you—oh, pray do—take the poor counsel of your once dear Eva.

LAUR. (*bitterly*) Pray, madam, go on—mock me now.

EVA. Oh, no; but I would pray you, by all the memory of the past, forego the ruinous course you are pursuing—be as you ever were—as you were meant to be—pure! good! honourable!

LAUR. 'Sdeath, madam! am I to be schooled by a disdainful—pray go on, Miss Carleton, your head appears to be sound, whatever your heart may be.

EVA. I do not deserve this—and I forgive it.

LAUR. Oh, I have lived twelve months in the world, and am not quite ignorant of its ways. Do you think I do not know the ground of your refusal?

EVA. You do, for I have told you.

LAUR. You have told me what you think proper—I may choose to think there is *some one* who will comfort you for your sacrifices.

EVA. Shame on you to be so cruel and unmanly!

LAUR. Oh, Eva! Eva! forgive me!

EVA. I do, and will forget you, for ever, if you were all you once were.

LAUR. (*wildly*) Ha! ha! what I once was, I never will be again. I am bad now—a reckless—profligate reprobate—I will be *worse*—mind you, *worse*! I will exhaust every sin to the dregs, and then invent new ones; and be it your comfort to know that you have driven me to it.

EVA. Oh, Laurence, Laurence! have pity on yourself, and remember there is one who will always love and pray for you as a sister. (*aside*) Oh, my heart! it will surely break! *Exit, L.*

LAUR. Sister! mocking, treacherous *woman*, for all evil be on me if I can think of a worse name to give you! All is over

now then; henceforth heedless riot and utter ruin for Laurence Vane!

Enter MRS. OLDFIELD and JULIET, R.

MRS. O. Ah, my dear Laurence! (*shakes hands*)

LAUR. My dearest madam, and my pretty Juliet!—come, no nonsense—old acquaintance, and all that, you know. (*kisses her*)

JULIET. Mr. Vane, for shame!

MRS. O. I'm really shocked! I'm glad to say, Laurence, that the General's health is improved; the General called this morning for a second plate of curried lobster; the General also partook of three cups of chocolate. I think the General's gout is abating, for the General took a bottle and a half of port yesterday afternoon.

LAUR. Under these circumstances, madam, I don't think the General will be troubled with gout long.

MRS. O. But bless me! they told me the milliner was here.

LAUR. Well, confound it, madam, you don't take *me* for a milliner? and I'm the only person here.

JULIET. She has been here, mamma; here is her box of patterns.

LAUR. Oh, yes; there was a young woman here, but I don't think she liked my company.

MRS. O. I hope, Laurence, you were not indiscreet enough to say anything to drive her away.

LAUR. My dear madam, I said nothing that I would not have said before the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne.

JULIET. She has not left this house, mamma, for her box is here.

LAUR. (*aside*) By Jove, it will be a refinement of revenge to propose to this girl with *her* under the same roof!

JULIET. How remarkably well you look, Laurence!

LAUR. (*aside*) That I believe to be a lie! (*aloud*) Yes, my pretty Juliet; the anticipation of a pleasure generally freshens one up a little.

MRS. O. I'm sure it's a wonder, considering the terrible life you lead—

LAUR. I am going to lead it no longer, madam! I'm about to get married!

MRS. O. Married!—(*aside*) plague take the man!

JULIET. Married! (*aside*) The wretch!

MRS. O. (*coolly*) I wish you joy, Mr. Vane!

JULIET. (*coolly*) And I'm sure I do.

LAUR. That is I believe so—I've got my own consent—I only want to get the lady's.

MRS. O. What!—you haven't asked her?

LAUR. Not yet.

JULIET. Is she very pretty?

LAUR. Would you like to know?

JULIET. Oh, dearly!

LAUR. Then look in that glass and judge for yourself.

MRS. O. What!—my dear Laurence—you ench—ahem, you surprise me!

JULIET. Really, Laurence, it's a shame to take one in in that way.

LAUR. Not at all. I positively believe I've been in love with you for a long while, ever since I can remember in fact; but somehow I've only just found it out: so if you will accept my hand—ahem! you'll excuse it being a little shaky—excitement you know, and all that. (*aside*) That's a nice free-and-easy style of making an offer. I like it, and I know it suits her.

MRS. O. My dear Laurence, this is so sudden, you can hardly expect an answer at once.

JULIET. I am really so confused, that I *must* ask a short time to recover myself.

LAUR. By all means; I'm the last man in the world to hurry a lady.

Enter the FOOTMAN, L.

FOOTMAN. The Baron Laval!e!

MRS. O. Who?

LAUR. Oh! a friend I told to call for me. May I introduce him?

MRS. O. Certainly; shew the Baron up. *Exit FOOTMAN, L.* I think I may answer for dear Juliet, Laurence; can you call in half an hour?

LAUR. 'Gad I think I'd better stop here, if you don't want any longer time than that.

MRS. O. No, no—you must go.

LAUR. Very good.

Enter DR. GRAYLOCK, L.

Ah, Baron! allow me to present you to my esteemed friend, Mrs. General Oldfield; and to her adorable and adored daughter, Miss Juliet Markham! (*salute*)

MRS. O. Baron, charmed to see you; and, anticipating your polite inquiries after the General, let me inform you that the General's health is vastly improved—the General is gaining his appetite, and losing his gout.

DR. G. Madame, I am enraptured to hear it.

LAUR. (*aside to DR. G.*) Baron, wish me joy—I've done it.

DR. G. Ah! (*aside*) And I'll *undo* it—idiot!

MRS. O. And how do you like England, Baron?

DR. G. (*bowing*) Madame, it is the land of beautiful women!

MRS. D. (*curtseying*) As France is the land of polished gentlemen!

LAUR. Oh, come, if you're going to bandy compliments, I'm off. Now, Baron, this is quite long enough for a first visit—come! Oh, Mrs. Oldfield, a word. (*they retire up*)

DR. G. (*to JULIET*) Mademoiselle, may a stranger, but one who takes a sincere interest in you, venture to solicit a few moment's private conversation?

JULIET. Dear me, Baron, this is a very strange request.

DR. G. It may appear so, mademoiselle, but when you hear the secret I have to impart——

JULIET. A secret! Oh, I love secrets! Come back as soon as you can get rid of Mr. Vane, and I will see you.

DR. G. Thanks, mademoiselle.

LAUR. Now, Baron, none of your confounded French palaver in that young lady's ears—come along. Ladies, your servant—in half-an-hour! (DR. GREYLOCK *salutes, &c., and Exit LAURENCE and DR. GREYLOCK*)

MRS. O. My dearest Juliet, this is the most charming event that could happen.

JULIET. What is, mamma?

MRS. O. What is, child? Why, this capture of £5,000 a year. Of course, you'll accept him?

JULIET. I suppose I must, but I can never forgive his preferring Eva.

MRS. O. Never speak of that wretched girl—we shall never see *her* again. Now, where is this milliner? (*goes to ring as ROSE runs in*)

ROSE. Oh, I've found her, ma'am. (*runs off*)

MRS. O. What now?

ROSE. (*running in*) Yes, ma'am, me and Peter.

PETER *brings in* EVA, L.

MRS. O. } Eva!

JULIET. }

EVA. Good heavens! Mrs. Markham! (*to ROSE*) Oh, why did you not tell me? (PETER and ROSE *indulge in a little dance behind*)

MRS. O. Leave the room, you simpletons. (ROSE and PETER *dance off*) So you have returned at last, Miss Eva!

EVA. I came to bring some patterns for Mrs. Oldfield, madam.

MRS. O. *You!* patterns! I am Mrs. General Oldfield! and is my niece a milliner?

EVA. If you were the wife of a duke, madam, your niece must earn her bread, but be assured, had I known where I was coming, you would have been spared the humiliation.

MRS. O. This is the most degrading position—if the General should hear of it, the General would assuredly have a relapse of the gout.

EVA. Neither the General nor you, madam, need never hear of me again, if you will be good enough to select your patterns another young lady shall attend you in future.

JULIET. Eva, this is positively shocking—I'm quite ashamed of you.

EVA. Are you, Juliet? I can bear that, so long as I am not ashamed of myself.

MRS. O. Good gracious, child! what have you been doing with yourself for twelve months?

EVA. Relying upon my own exertions, madam, and burdening no one.

JULIET. And, my stars, Eva! where are all your curls?

EVA. I have something else to think about than my hair, Juliet. Will it please you, madam, to select your patterns, my time is not my own.

MRS. O. Well, I must say, you have brought a shocking disgrace upon the family, but I suppose I must do something to assist you, you seem——

EVA. May I beg you, madam, to forego any such intention, I would accept assistance from no one, and of all people in the wide world, least of all from *you*!

MRS. O. Well, you are the most ungrateful——

EVA. No, madam; but I am independant.

MRS. O. Ha! ha! I never heard of an independant milliner, unless she had some substantial assistance beyond her earnings.

EVA. I hope I do not understand you, madam, or I should know how to reply in a manner you would hardly like.

MRS. O. Upon my word, you have a rare proud spirit!

EVA. No, madam, not so; but I have spirit enough to defend my good name against evil and cruel suspicions.

MRS. O. I suppose you still hope to lure back your old sweetheart, Laurence Vane.

EVA. I have no such hope, madam! more, I have no such desire.

MRS. O. If you *have* any such hope, banish it at once. Mr. Vane has just proposed——

JULIET. Don't, mamma!

MRS. O. Has just proposed to my daughter!

EVA. Ah! (*aside*) Well, better so! the struggle will be sooner ended! (*aloud, tremulously*) I—I—wish them both joy. Cau I go now, madam?

MRS. O. I thought that would bring down your pride a degree or two.

EVA. I have no pride, madam!

MRS. O. I dare say, now, you could carry your stoicism so far as to stay and witness her acceptance of him.

JULIET. Pray, mamma——

EVA. I could; but my time is not my own—I——

MRS. O. Ha, ha! I thought how it would be, you are ready to cry your eyes out, and want to go and do it.

EVA. To prove to you, madam, how false is the miserable opinion of your sister's child, I *will be present*; but I must return home first—Laurence Vane has ceased to be anything to me, as I have ceased to be anything to him or any of my family—I will be present in a very short time. (*aside*) I can but die once, and if in his presence—the better—the better.

Exit, L.

MRS. O. Did you ever know such a haughty cold-blooded puss in your life.

JULIET. But, mamma, it was very wrong to let her come; and it will make me feel so awkward, and Laurence too.

MRS. O. Fiddle-de-dee! but I must go and look after the General. If the General wants me, and I am not there, the General will swear and blaspheme in the most horrible manner. Be back directly; ta, ta!

Exit, R.

JULIET. Poor Eva, I'm really sorry for her, although she doesn't seem as if she cared for any pity. So—I suppose my fate is fixed at last; heigho! well, £5,000 a year's a very pretty——

Enter ROSE, L.

ROSE. Please, miss, here's a Baron.

JULIET. Oh! shew him up.

Exit ROSE, L.

What on earth can this strange creature have to say to me, I wonder; it must be something about Laurence, I suppose.

Re-enter DR. GRAYLOCK, L.

JULIET. Now, Baron, for this marvellous revelation.

DR. G. Time being short, mademoiselle, you must pardon my abruptness. You are about to accept the hand of Mr. Laurence Vane?

JULIET. If it be any concern of yours, Baron, I am.

DR. G. You know his character?

JULIET. I wish to hear no character of my future husband from a stranger.

DR. G. You are prepared then to accept the hand of a reckless, wild, lawless, extravagant spendthrift?

JULIET. Baron, I must beg leave to withdraw.

DR. G. In an instant. Pray answer me—are you prepared to receive such a husband?

JULIET. To rid myself of this strange impertinence, I will answer—I *am* prepared!

DR. G. Good, so far. In addition to this, are *you* prepared to accept the hand of—a *pauper*!

JULIET. What!—this, sir, is a most malicious scandal—Mr. Vane is rich——

DR. G. *Was*! In twelve months he has squandered nearly his entire fortune!

JULIET. Impossible!

DR. G. Fact—you may believe in my authority—as I have won the *greater portion of it myself*!

JULIET. Perfidious!—but he was educated in deceit, by a worthless old rogue of a doctor—he deceived me once before—he tries to do it again—oh, mamma!

Re-enter MRS. OLDFIELD, R.

MRS. O. My dearest child.

DR. G. Ladies, I will take my leave. Laurence expects me. I shall hope for the hour of seeing you again. *Exit, L.*

JULIET. Oh, mamma!—would you believe!—that base!—treacherous!—cowardly Laurence Vane is a beggar!

MRS. O. Good heavens, Juliet! what do you mean?

JULIET. Oh, that odious Baron has told me all—that he has gambled away his whole fortune, and that the Baron has, himself, won the greater part of it.

MRS. O. Was ever such an infamous attempt at villany heard of? But of course, my dear, you know your duty.

JULIET. I do, mamma! and be sure I'll discharge it!

MRS. O. And don't call that dear Baron odious, Juliet—there is a very distinguished air about him. If I were you I would make myself agreeable to the Baron.

JULIET. Oh, mamma! I am so mortified I could cry for shame and vexation.

MRS. O. Don't do anything so foolish, my dear; thank your stars the warning came in time.

Re-enter, EVA, L.

EVA. You see I am here, madam.

MRS. O. Yes, my dear Eva; and now you *are* here, you must remain, and never go back to that horrid work place again.

EVA. I thank you, madam, if you mean me any kindness; but you are putting me to so cruel a proof of endurance, that I can scarcely think so.

MRS. O. Why, you are here of your own free will.

EVA. I am so, to disabuse you of the unjust suspicions you formed of me; but under any circumstances, I must decline your civility.

Enter FOOTMAN, L.

FOOTMAN. Mr. Vane and the Baron Lavalle!

EVA *retires hastily up stage as LAURENCE and DR. GRAYLOCK enter, L.*

LAUR. Come along, Baron; by the body of Bacchus, you shall witness my triumph! Ladies, this black-bearded child of France has broken the hearts of eleven hundred young ladies, and now I'm going to break his if I can, by shewing him a prize he cannot compete for.

MRS. O. You seem in spirits, Mr. Vane.

LAUR. Yes, I've just heard some bad news—that always puts me in a good humour.

MRS. O. *Very* bad news?

LAUR. Well, pretty bad, but it's nothing; a rascally agent of mine has made tracks with a few loose thousands, that's all; but who cares!

JULIET. (*aside*) Hypocrite!

LAUR. Now, my dearest Juliet, you need not hesitate to speak before this baronial party; he is in my profoundest confidence. Are you prepared to answer my—(*sees EVA and starts in amazement*) Ah! why is that girl brought here to witness this?

DR. G. (*aside*) As I live, it is my darling Eva!

MRS. O. Because she desired it.

LAUR. Is that so, Miss Carleton?

EVA. (*with an effort*) It is, sir.

LAUR. Then, by heaven! you are the most extraordinary young woman I know. (*aside*) Heartless, cold-blooded jilt; and I loved this girl—all scruples are over now. (*aloud*) Be it so, dear Juliet. I repeat my offer, and await your answer.

JULIET. If I understand you rightly, you do me the distinguished honour of offering me your hand?

LAUR. Exactly so.

JULIET. Then hear my answer, Laurence Vane. In days gone by, you bitterly galled my pride; you outraged me in a fashion that no woman ever forgives; you made me the mock and jest of the household. The hour of reprisal has arrived; your offer is your fortune and yourself; and hear my answer. I reject both it and you with scorn and contempt!

EVA. (*aside*) Ah!

LAUR. Ha, ha! (*aside*) Malediction! this before *her*! But let me turn the tables. (*aloud—laughing heartily*) Ha, ha! my pretty termagant. So you really thought I meant it, did you? Ha, ha! I only made the offer in joke.

JULIET. The more abject and pitiful coward you! Go take the fragments of your broken fortunes and the shadow of your shattered frame to some less fastidious girl. Juliet Markham is no fit match for a decrepit *bankrupt*!

MRS. O. No, indeed! what would the General say?

LAUR. A what?

JULIET. If you like the word better—*beggar*.

LAUR. Ha, ha! who may have pleased your ears with that pretty tale?

JULIET. I have no seal upon my lips, your *friend* there—Baron Lavallo.

LAUR. You?

DR. G. My very dear friend, yes. You said I was in your confidence; I am so—more than you think—what with losses at play—riotous living—mortgages you cannot redeem—your whole fortune is gone—save that sum in the agent's hands, and now that is gone, too! Your own steward told me all.

LAUR. Traitor! this is your doing, then? *You*, of all men, to turn upon me. You! who have preyed upon me the most. You shall answer this!

DR. G. I will.

LAUR. Be assured you shall. I see now, madam, the disinterested motive of your noble refusal—ha, ha! Who cares? I can laugh at you all. I thank heaven I am a ruined man; my friends will all fall off—let them, who cares? I am now in the world *alone*.

EVA. (*advancing, c.*) Laurence, not so, hear me, and do not think me unmaidenly. I refused to share your good fortune though you wooed me twice to do so, let me woo *you* now, to suffer me to share your *evil* fortune. Whilst you were rich and prosperous, poor Eva was no fit helpmate for you; now you are poor, friendless, deserted, if you will let her she will be your fond friend, companion—*wife*.

LAUR. (*clasping her in his arms*) Oh, Eva, Eva—angel! but no! never will I drag you along the thorny path I must tread!

EVA. I will clear away the thorns, Laurence, and strew our life-path with roses yet.

(*during preceding speech of LAURENCE, DR. GRAYLOCK has retired up, and removed his false beard and wig—he returns R.*)

DR. G. (R.) Take her at her word, my dear boy.

ALL. Dr. Graylock!

DR. G. Yes—the Baron's part is played out.

LAUR. (L. C.) My dear Doctor, were *you*—

DR. G. Yes, Laurence; I have been with you from the the evil beginning to the happy end. I suffered you to drain the intoxicating cup of pleasure, that you might discover how dull and insipid the draught really is. For your fortune—saving what you yourself have expended—it is untouched. The money I and my well-paid friends have eased you of is in my hands, and will be in yours to-day; but the hand you hold is of more value than all that fortune twenty times told.

LAUR. How can a wretch such as I deserve so much happiness? Dearest Eva, you will not recall your promise now that I am rich again!

EVA. No, Laurence, it is too late now; rich or poor, I am yours now, and for ever!

DR. G. Well, Miss Juliet, what do you think of the "worthless old rogue of a Doctor" now?

JULIET. Forgive me, Doctor, I am heartily ashamed. Eva, I can really wish you joy. I could never have made Laurence happy. Do you try, and do so.

EVA. I shall have no other aim in life——

LAUR. Nor I—but to deserve it.

DR. G. Nor I—but to witness it.

MRS. O. I wonder what on earth the General will say!

LAUR. Never mind what the General says; let us know what the general *public* says, for (*coming forward*) you are the jury who must try us offenders. If you have sympathized with our grief, and with our gladness, prosperous indeed will have been the issue of "LAURENCE'S LOVE SUIT."

Curtain.

MRS. O.

JULIET.

DR. G.

LAURA.

VANE.

B.

L.

Wooler (J.P.)

THE
MAID OF HONOUR.

A Comedietta,
IN ONE ACT.

BY
J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Love in Livery, A Man without a Head, Founded on Facts, A Twice Told Tale,
Sisterly Service, Did I Dream It? A Faint Heart who *did* Win Fair Lady,
Orange Blossoms, Old Phil's Birthday, Allow me to Apologize, I'll
Write to the "Times," Keep your Temper, Marriage at any
Price, Plots for Petticoats, The Silver Wedding, A
Hunt for a Husband, &c. &c. &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

MAID OF HONOUR.

First Performed at the Theatre Royal Strand, (under the management of Mrs. Swanborough, and Mr. W. H. Swanborough) on Monday, the 16th day of May, 1864.

Characters.

COUNT LEONI	Mr. D. JAMES.
BARON TORTONI	Mr. H. J. TURNER.
OLYMPIA (<i>Duchess of Carrara</i>)	Miss KATE CARSON.
GIULIA, COUNTESS D'ESTRELLA (<i>her Cousin, and one of her Maids of Honour, aged 18</i>)	Miss A. SWANBOROUGH.
LAURA D'URBINO (<i>disguised as Count Cesario</i>)	Miss E. JOHNSTONE.

Pages, Guards, &c.

Costumes.

BARON TORTONI.—Yellow doublet, trunks, cloak, &c.

COUNT LEONI.—Maroon velvet doublet, laced with gold, trunks, and loose white boots.

OLYMPIA.—White satin, and green velvet mantle.

GIULIA.—*First Dress*: Straw coloured satin. *Second Dress*: White satin doublet, trunks, and white boots.

LAURA.—White and mauve doublet, trunks, and white boots.

THE MAID OF HONOUR.

SCENE.—*Magnificent Saloon in the Palace of Carrara; arched doorway at back leading to a corridor.*

Enter BARON TORTONI, C. *from* L.

BARON. I wonder which of the Seven Cardinal Sins I have committed that I should have become chamberlain to a woman. If I'd committed the whole seven from my youth upwards—I swear by every hair of my reverend beard the punishment would be excessive—a proud, fantastical, capricious woman—a Duchess, too! if it had been a queen it might be endured—but a Duchess!—a Duchess of two-and-twenty—why my hair was white when she was in swaddling-clothes, and now head usher in a Court where there are nothing but mischievous Maids of Honour, and saucy pages with their hair scented! I wish, with all my heart, this precious Prince of Savoy would come and take her away—the Maids of Honour and the pages and all—except the Grand Chamberlain.

Enter PAGE, L.

PAGE. The Count Leoni, my lord, solicits an audience of her highness.

BARON. Very well; he must have one, I suppose. *Exit* PAGE, L. The smart envoy of his Highness of Savoy—a very courteous and proper gentleman—reminds me of what I was when I had a brown beard and a straighter back.

Enter LEONI, L.

LEONI. Baron, I salute you; think you her grace would condescend to favour me with an interview?

BARON. Really, Count, what her grace may condescend to do, or say, or think, is a matter of more mystery than I could undertake to solve.

LEONI. Might I trouble you to ascertain?

BARON. Why you know you may; isn't it my unutterable privilege to carry questions to her and bring back answers?

LEONI. You will highly oblige me.

BARON. I will do what I can, (*aside*) especially as it is to get rid of my fine Duchess.

Goes into corridor, beckons PAGE, from R., they exeunt, R.

LEONI. For the first time in my life, when a woman was in the case, I am at fault. Her capricious Highness of Carrara is beyond my skill—one day she *will* see me, the next she will not. I fear I have but little chance—I, with the quick ears of these pages about me, I had best be cautious—I fear the Prince has but little chance—still if——

Re-enter BARON, C. from L.

BARON. The Duchess sends word, my lord, that an interview at this moment would be both inconvenient and unnecessary, as she had not yet decided upon an answer to the overtures made to her by you on behalf of Prince Louis of Savoy.

LEONI. I am constrained to say, Baron, that I think the Duchess treats the Prince of Savoy's envoy with but very scant courtesy.

BARON. As I am not the Duchess, my lord, it is a question I cannot enter into.

LEONI. I am here to ask her highness's hand on behalf of my master, Prince Louis of Savoy.

BARON. I am perfectly aware of that, my lord; but I am also aware that her highness's hand is her own, and that it is in her power to give or withhold it as she pleases.

LEONI. Undoubtedly; but it would be more courteous to give me a decided answer at once—yes or no.

BARON. Perhaps so; but I never knew a woman who could do it. I was, however, ordered to inform you, Count, if you could attend her highness in half an hour, she would be prepared with a final answer.

LEONI. I must submit to her highness's decision—good morning, Baron. (*aside*) If this fantastic beauty fancies I am going to dance attendance in her ante-chambers every hour, she is very much mistaken. One more audience, and it is the last, as sure as my name is—pish—blunderer. *Exit, L.*

BARON. I'm very much afraid my noble mistress is playing fast and loose with this offer from Savoy; however——

Enter LAURA as COUNT CESARIO, L.; she is passing towards corridor, when she is stopped by BARON.

By your leave, my lord; you cannot pass this way.

LAURA. I am going to the apartments of the Countess d'Estrella——

BARON. What! you! the Countess d'Estrella——

LAURA. (*aside*) Mercy on me, what a little fool! (*aloud*) I mean—how very silly—but I was thinking of something else,

I mean I am going to my friend Leonardo, captain of the Guard.

BARON. The officers of the Guard are not quartered in the apartments of the ladies of the court.

LAURA. I suppose not; it's a very ill-regulated establishment.

BARON. That remark, Count Cesario, is not only improper in the abstract, but personally offensive, since the Court is under my control.

LAURA. Ah, true, that may account for it.

BARON. Count, I consider you are scurrilous! You are impudent, sir.

LAURA. Very likely; I was brought up among the Maids of Honor.

Two PAGES appear, C. from R.

BARON. I shall save myself the trouble of replying to you, sir. The Duchess herself approaches.

LAURA. So I perceive; and as I have not received any commands to attend her highness, I could not think of appearing before her. Adieu! my dear, dear Baron. *Exit, L.*

BARON. Graceless young puppy; if I had the handling of him, I'd——

PAGES enter, and OLYMPIA, C. from R.

OLYMP. One of you go, and send the Countess D'Estrelle here! *Exit PAGE, C. to L.*

You gave my answer to the Count Leoni, Baron?

BARON. I did so, your highness.

OLYMP. That is well; you can retire.

BARON. With your highness's favour, I have a serious complaint to make against that impudent young scapegrace, the Count Cesario, from Padua; he was this moment trying to force his way into the apartments of the Maids of Honour

OLYMP. Insolent! be at ease, Baron, I will take measures with him. *BARON bows and exit, C. to L.*

(sighs) Ah me! rank may have its pleasures, but of a surety it has its penalties also; coronet must match with coronet, province with province, whilst the heart, alas! must remain unmatched for ever. Ah, Giulia!——

Enter GIULIA, C. from L.

GIULIA. Your highness sent for me?

OLYMP. I did, cousin; I have something to talk to you about.

GIULIA. Then, for goodness' sake, send away these curious

young devils of pages, or it will be all over the palace in an hour.

(DUCHESS *makes signs*—PAGES *retire, C. to L.*)

OLYMP. (*sighing*) Oh, cousin Giulia, I am very unhappy.

GIULIA. (*sighing*) Oh, cousin Olympia, so am I.

OLYMP. You!—absurd!

GIULIA. Of course not so unhappy as your highness. I'm unhappy enough for a Countess, but I should never take the liberty of being so unhappy as a Duchess.

OLYMP. Put jesting aside, Giulia, marriage is a sad, tiresome annoying thing, is it not?

GIULIA. A terrible calamity indeed, madam; I think every girl as soon as she arrives at the age of twelve should be sent to a nunnery at once.

OLYMP. Of course you do!

GIULIA. Yes, before the men begin to call them doves and angels; for I'm sure a nunnery's a fitter place for doves and angels than this terribly wicked world. Come, cousin, here's my hand; now then, *I'll* take the veil if you will—there!

OLYMP. Oh, nonsense!

GIULIA. Of course it's nonsense, and you know it, so why talk in that manner about marriage?

OLYMP. Well, then, once for all, come what may, I will not marry this Prince of Savoy.

GIULIA. As you please, cousin—I'm sure *I* won't.

OLYMP. You! Ha, ha, ha! men do not marry children.

GIULIA. (*crossing*) Children! Is your highness pleased to call *me* a child?

OLYMP. But little beyond it, I take it.

GIULIA. Well, as you please. (*aside*) I'll be revenged for this.

OLYMP. And I'm sure I cannot tell how it is I take you so into my confidence—so young—so giddy—so thoughtless.

GIULIA. I giddy—thoughtless! why, I'm the most demure, the most reflective——

OLYMP. Reflective! ha, ha, ha!

GIULIA. In proof whereof, my very gracious cousin and mistress, I have *reflected* on your strange refusal to listen to the Prince of Savoy.

OLYMP. A man I never saw.

GIULIA. He is a Prince!

OLYMP. (*haughtily*) Giulia, a Duchess of Carrara needs no elevation.

GIULIA. None of pride or temper, certainly.

OLYMP. Cousin, you forget yourself.

GIULIA. Good sooth, I did; I forgot that I had not told you the *result* of my reflections.

OLYMP. And pray what mighty results have your reflections arrived at?

GIULIA. These : You refuse the Prince of Savoy because you love some one else.

OLYMP. Giulia, leave the chamber this instant !

GIULIA. Well, perhaps I deserve a rebuke for venturing upon the truth in a ducal palace ; but I am a free outspoken girl, and therefore I must ask you, do you know the Prince's envoy—one Count Leoni ? Bless me, cousin, how blushing does become you !

OLYMP. Countess D'Estrella, I command you to be silent.

GIULIA. Duchess, I am dumb ! (*a pause*)

OLYMP. Giulia, what do you think of this—this—Count Leoni?—Well, girl, why don't you answer ?

GIULIA I had your highness' orders to keep silent.

OLYMP. Yes, from malapert remarks ; not when I ask you a question. I ask you, what think you of this Count Leoni ?

GIULIA. Your highness ! I never think of him at all.

OLYMP. Tush ! you know my meaning—how do you like him ?

GIULIA. I haven't the slightest liking for him in the world.

OLYMP. You provoking girl—what is your opinion of his person, his appearance ?

GIULIA. Oh, I understand your highness now ! (*aside*) I'll try and tease her a little, and get at the truth too. (*aloud*) Why, cousin, as you seem so anxious for my judgment, I will make a point of studying him more attentively—at present I only know that he has two eyes, for he is always staring at one so ; also that he has two lips, for he is always talking nonsense to one : and I trust he has two ears, that one may box them for his impudence.

OLYMP. I can hardly believe that the Count Leoni would be guilty of such conduct, or that you could be guilty of encouraging it.

GIULIA. Really, your highness, I never encouraged him ; because I thought—that—I guessed—you yourself were——

OLYMP. Giulia !

GIULIA. I might have known that a Duchess of Carrara would not stoop to a Count of Savoy ; and now that you assure me it is not so, why, perhaps, I may listen to him a little more attentively next time.

OLYMP. Who assured you that I do not?—tush—no more of this——

GIULIA. No, madam ; but I have a remarkably shrewd eye in these matters, and I could have sworn by all the saints in the calendar that—you were—pardon me, in love—it's not with my Cesario, is it, pray ?

OLYMP. Pshaw ! women are no more likely than men to fall in love with children.

GIULIA. (*aside*) Again, oh! I *will* be revenged. (*aloud*) What, call my poor little husband elect, a child! Well perhaps he is—there—I'll give him up—and secure the Count Leoni.

OLYMP. Talk reason, girl; I think—that is—the Count *might* look higher—let alone the foolish disparity of years.

GIULIA. Aha! you *do* love him now, I see it—well—I intend to be your rival; it's against my allegiance, I know; but you have so mocked at the venerable years to which I have arrived, that——

OLYMP. Silence, Giulia, I forbid you to talk in this strain any longer, and the mention of Cesario reminds me of a charge against him. He tried to force his way into the chamber of the Maids of Honour.

GIULIA. Ah, poor little fellow, he was looking after me.

OLYMPIA. He had better not repeat his search; and I must further say to you that the terms of intimacy upon which you are with that young man——

GIULIA. Child, madam, if you remember?

OLYMPIA. Well, child or boy, your intimacy reflects a scandal upon my Court, and must be diminished or wholly discontinued.

GIULIA. What, take away both my Counts—Cesario and Leoni too? Please, ma'am, will you allow your chamberlain, old Baron Tortoni, to make love to me?

OLYMP. Be serious if you can—it is for your character's sake I speak, and when I speak I command, so no more. What answer to make without offence to the Count Leoni touching his master's suit, I know not.

GIULIA. Your highness is resolved to refuse him?

OLYMP. Firmly.

GIULIA. Then leave it all to me, madam; I'll undertake to dispose of the whole affair——

OLYMP. You? how in the name of wonder?——

GIULIA. Leave that to me, madam; have I your authority?

OLYMP. You have, but beware of compromising my name.

GIULIA. Never fear, madam, I would rather compromise my own.

OLYMP. I shall leave you, then, to receive him; and mind, do not let me hear or see any further love passages between yourself and Count Cesario.

Exit, C. to R.

GIULIA. What a ridiculous thing is pride? the Duchess loves the Count, and is ashamed to own it. Well, I'll manage to sicken the Count of her, on his master's account, that is for her sake, and on his own account for my sake, for I will never suffer the Duchess of Carrara to marry a trumpery Count of Savoy! As for me, I have such a contempt for that stupid passion called love, that in order to keep other lovers off, I

have elected one—and let everybody know I am betrothed to—my darling friend Laura d'Urbino, the prettiest girl and greatest coquette in Padua! Aha! she is here, my dearest husband—

Enter LAURA, as CESARIO, L.

—that is to be. (*kisses her*)

Enter BARON TORTONI, C. from L.

BARON. Well, if I were to say I was surprised at this enormity, it would not be the truth.

GIULIA. Well you must not come and tell falsehoods here.

BARON. And do you think I shall tolerate this scandalous conduct within twenty paces of her highness's apartments?

GIULIA. I should think you most probably would, as her highness herself sanctions it.

BARON. What, the Duchess of Carrara sanctions profligacy—treason! I say it is treason to say so.

LAURA. (*aside to GIULIA*) It certainly was lip-treason, dear, two girls kissing each other.

GIULIA. What should you say now, Baron, if I were to declare that you yourself are the cause of the present scene which outrages your sense of decency so greatly.

BARON. Say! that it was an abominable license even for a Maid of Honour.

GIULIA. Well, it is so; and you have done me the unkindest piece of mischief any poor girl ever suffered from.

LAURA. What, then? Chamberlain or no chamberlain I'll—

GIULIA. (*aside to CESARIO*) Please, dear, leave it all to me.

BARON. I am utterly amazed.

GIULIA. If you were to say you were utterly ashamed it would be a fitter term. Did you not accuse my dear little husband to her highness?

LAURA. Accuse me! I am a very patient man, but this passes patience!

BARON. I did so; it was my duty, when your dear little husband was about to enter the apartments of the Maids of Honour.

LAURA. And pray, Baron, are you the keeper of the Maids of Honour?

BARON. I am responsible for the proper conduct of the palace.

LAURA. For the discharge of which duty I should think it was necessary for you to conduct yourself properly, and do you call it proper conduct to break in upon the *tête-à-tête* of a lady and her affianced husband.

BARON. Upon my word, young sir, you'll come to something at last.

LAURA. Not to be a spy with white hairs, I hope.

BARON. A spy!

GIULIA. Pray, pray, gentlemen! Baron, remember the Count's youth; Cesario, respect the Baron's age. Let me finish: the Duchess was highly incensed, and has ordered my dear Cesario to quit the Court at once.

LAURA. Ah!

GIULIA. But at my earnest entreaty she consented to our final interview here, and can you be so cruelly malicious as to interrupt us, when we are parting perhaps for ever. (*pretends to weep*)

LAURA. Giulia, dear Giulia! Oh, you spiteful old man!

BARON. Under those circumstances, of course I must remove my interdict.

LAURA. I wish you'd increase the obligation by removing yourself at the same time.

BARON. But be assured, my malapert young sir, that it is solely on account of the Countess D'Estrella, who is a gentle, well-behaved young lady; I only wish I could say as much of the young gentleman she has been weak enough to fall in love with.

Exit, L.

GIULIA. Ha, ha, ha! we have got rid of the old gentleman beautifully. Admit I am a very clever girl to have thought of such an ingenious device.

LAURA. What! am I not banished, then?

GIULIA. No, no, dear! all fiction, except that he did denounce you to the Duchess, and she read me a lecture on our familiarity; but we must be more guarded, or all will be discovered; indeed I wonder, for my part, that you have continued to remain undetected for six months already.

LAURA. Circumspect conduct, dear, and a severe reprobation of the advances of certain ladies, who have taken a fancy to my extremely pretty person.

GIULIA. That costs you very little self-denial, at any rate.

LAURA. None at all; but I never could quite understand your mad freak of sending for me to Padua, and making me your husband elect.

GIULIA. You must be very slow of understanding, then; for I have told you a thousand and one times, I was worried to death by the feeble gallantries I was compelled to hear from the lips of our gay Lords of Carrara, and so to put a stop to it once and for all, until I fell in with a pair of lips which it would not be so painful to listen to, I sent for you—you came, and soon won my young and inexperienced heart.

LAURA. Well, I shall never ask you a similar favour; for, to say truth, the amusement is rather insipid.

GIULIA. Well, to you it may be; but I am not like you, who

have been thinking of love and marriage from your cradle upwards.

LAURA. That's a libel.

GIULIA. So is truth. But if I have no love affairs of my own to attend to, I have those of others on my hands. Our serene Duchess will have nothing to say to the Prince of Savoy, and I firmly believe is over head and ears in love with his handsome envoy. Well, she *won't* have the Prince, and she *shan't* have the envoy.

LAURA. Do you want him yourself by accident?

GIULIA. No; do you?

LAURA. I? ha! ha!

GIULIA. Oh! your doublet and hose will not prevent your looking with a woman's eye upon a handsome man; but be at rest, no one here will have him, and if I don't very soon send him back to Savoy, why, my name's not——

Re-enter BARON, L.

BARON. Countess d'Estella, the envoy of Savoy must bear the blame of this fresh interruption; he awaits her highness's pleasure.

GIULIA. Admit him and Cesario. You may as well accompany the Baron; but pray, Baron, do not lead the innocent young man into any of the mad frolics you are so famous for.

BARON. I initiate him—save the mark!

LAURA. Well, Baron. I don't think you would; but you are so witty and agreeable that I cannot deny myself half an hour of your society; adieu, dearest! Now my frolicsome chamberlain.

BARON. You don't seem quite heart-broken at your last meeting, I must say.

Exeunt BARON and LAURA, L.

GIULIA. Now, then, we shall see what a "child" can do in the way of outreaching her elders; there will be no harm done. Olympia does not care for the Prince at all, and not much I take it for the Count. I must have my amusement, and perhaps a little revenge; she will forgive me—ahem!

Enter COUNT LEONI, L.

LEONI. Countess, I salute you. I am here, by the Duchess of Carrara's orders, to receive her highness's answer to the overtures of my master, Prince Louis of Savoy. May I hope for an audience of her highness?

GIULIA. Count, as I fear the Duchess has come to an unfavourable conclusion, she deputed me, her cousin, to receive you, that she might avoid the pain of a personal refusal.

LEONI. May I venture to ask, madam, what strong objections

have induced her Highness to discard unseen, a Prince of high lineage, ample possessions, and unspotted reputation?

GIULIA. My duty, Count, is simply to act on my mistress's commands, not to speculate upon them.

LEONI. The Prince will doubtless be highly flattered by her highness's decision.

GIULIA. Of course, my lord; her Highness can be actuated by no personal motives, never having seen the Prince; but if you will promise to be as secret as a whole college of Jesuits, I will tell you somewhat.

LEONI. Madame, if you will rely on the word of a soldier and a gentleman, I promise you secrecy the most profound.

GIULIA. I believe you, and now, (*slowly*) take my word for it, the Prince of Savoy has had a very lucky escape from the Duchess of Carrara.

LEONI. You amaze me, Countess—in what way?

GIULIA. She is as capricious as ten duchesses and five hundred Maids of Honour.

LEONI. A very venial fault.

GIULIA. She is haughty.

LEONI. A Duchess should be so.

GIULIA. Recklessly profuse of expenditure.

LEONI. Her rank may demand it.

GIULIA. Of boundless extravagance.

LEONI. Her means may warrant it.

GIULIA. Immoderately given to pleasure.

LEONI. The taste is not uncommon.

GIULIA. (*aside*) All my charges parried. Then to the last : (*aloud*) And to conclude—she loves some one else.

LEONI. Ah! now you have me at fault. Louis of Savoy could accept no second love. But, give me leave to ask, why, you, Countess, a relation as well as adherent of her highness, should thus unveil her follies or her faults, unsolicited, to a comparative stranger?

GIULIA. A feeling, Count, which no woman checks—revenge for a love-wound. The very youth whom she loves was my betrothed husband; she allured him from me. You saw the youth with Baron Tortoni as you ascended the staircase?

LEONI. I did—a slight, pretty lad, who must wait a year or so for a beard.

GIULIA. The same—a young Count of Padua, and my lover. Now you know the motive of my conduct.

LEONI. I do, and thank you heartily for your friendly warning; still, I would fain have a final answer from the Duchess's own lips, if it were practicable.

GIULIO. I will instantly make enquiry of her Highness; but, mind, you have my liberty, if not my life, in your hands.

LEONI. I will guard both as if they were my own.

GIULIA *salutes and exit, R.*

So—proud, profuse and profligate—'fore heaven! a lucky escape! and yet I love her, or rather loved her, for that is over; but to throw away a Prince of Savoy for the maudlin love of a beardless boy! Fool! ever to have thought that my mad scheme could have come to another issue! Here is this young Maid of Honour, I have often noted her—she is witty, accomplished, and well born—my rank enables me to address her on equal terms—what hindrance is there, that in place of her unworthy mistress, she should not become——

Re-enter GIULIA, R.

GIULIA. My lord, the Duchess will attend you immediately.

LEONI. I thank her highness; it is a mere form, I know; but etiquette requires it; or, believe me, I should have no wish to change my companion.

GIULIA. My lord!

LEONI. You look surprised, madam. Plainly, then, I have more pleasure in the society of the Countess D'Estrella than in that of the Duchess of Carrara.

GIULIA. It seems, my lord, you are little affected by your master's disappointment, since you can afford to be so merry on the occasion.

LEONI. Merry, madam! I was never more serious.

GIULIA. Perhaps then, Count, you are really so affected at the result of your mission, that your brain is a little touched.

LEONI. Do not pretend to misunderstand me, madam. Of the ladies of Carrara you only have I regarded with more than common interest; our rank and position are equal, and if your heart be unoccupied as mine is, and you would make an exchange, it would throw a sunshine on the remainder of my career.

GIULIA. Could you, Count, make it convenient to call at Carrara next summer, as I am rather too young to entertain so serious a question at present.

LEONI. You are laughing at me, madam.

GIULIA. Are you not rather laughing at *me*?

LEONI. The gentlemen of Savoy do not insult ladies in that fashion.

GIULIA. The ladies of Carrara believe it—nor in *any* fashion. In that belief, Count, I leave you, as I hear the Duchess approaching; remember, her character is a secret; as for the Paduan Count, that is *none*, although you can make no use of it. (*aside*) Mercy on us! matters have taken a pretty turn now, and the "child" is really the rival of her mistress. *Exit, L.*

LEONI. Was she really laughing at me, or shall I venture to——

Enter OLYMPIA, R., and PAGES, who retire.

OLYMP. Count Leoni, you have sought an interview which must naturally be painful to both parties.

LEONI. To me, madam, as an unsuccessful envoy, it is undoubtedly so ; but I solicited it that I might at least hear the sentence from your own lips.

OLYMP. You will readily believe, count, that I appreciate the honour intended me by the Prince of Savoy, though circumstances—say woman's wilfulness, if you will—compel me to decline it.

LEONI. Your final answer then, madam, is——

OLYMP. That, with all gratitude, I absolutely refuse the hand of Prince Louis of Savoy.

LEONI. That matter then, madam, must be at an end ; although you must attribute to chagrin the apparent rudeness of my suspicion, that a hand is rarely refused to a Prince, unless its owner has promised it elsewhere.

OLYMP. (*haughtily*) What is the meaning of this strange language, Count Leoni ?

LEONI. Nothing, madam ; but I look upon a Count as a sorry exchange for a Prince.

OLYMP. (*aside*) Can he suspect—can he guess that I love him ? or has Giulia betrayed me ? (*aloud*) You speak in riddles, sir ; still, I may avow, that were I disposed to bestow my hand on a gentleman of birth and breeding, I should consult only my own pleasure in the act.

LEONI. You have an undoubted right, madam, and happy indeed would be the gentleman so honoured.

OLYMP. (*aside*) It must be so ; he surely divines my love, or he would sue more warmly for his master. (*aloud*) If circumstances do not actually recall you to Savoy, Count, I should feel honoured by your continuance at Carrara for as many days as you can spare.

LEONI. Your highness is most gracious, but my term of leave will shortly expire. There is, however, one subject to which I would pray your attention, and pray for your influence.

OLYMP. Command me, Count, on any subject.

LEONI. Madam, though unfortunate in love service for my master, I hope to be more fortunate in my own.

OLYMP. (*aside*) Now he will speak, and now I fain would stop him. (*aloud*) Would not another occasion better suit this matter, Count ?

LEONI. No other, madam. I love a lady of this Court with whom you are all-powerful—I would beg your highness's interest on my behalf.

OLYMP. (*aside*) I am all-powerful with no one but myself.

(*aloud*) I will promise it, Count, on one condition, that you do not press the matter further to-day.

LEONI. Alas, madam! if I am not answered to-day, to-morrow I leave for Savoy.

OLYMP. (*aside*) This is most embarrassing. (*aloud*) Well, Count, does the lady return your love?

LEONI. I cannot say, madam; but if I had your highness's permission to speak—you are silent, madam—I should at least have some balm for the disappointment I have met with; and that can only be the possession of the Countess D'Estrella.

OLYMP. (*astounded*) The Countess D'Estrella! (*aside*) Oh, shame! (*aloud*) What, Count Leoni, have you ventured to tamper with the feelings of any of my ladies, and one who is a mere child? Is this the custom of the nobles of Savoy? (*aside*) What humiliation!

LEONI. It is the custom of the nobles of Savoy, madam, when they feel an honest passion, to avow it; again, therefore, I crave permission to address the Countess D'Estrella.

OLYMP. Which permission, Count Leoni, you will never have—be sure of that. She is my relation, a child, and under my protection and control. I command you, sir, never to allude to this subject again.

LEONI. To you, madam, be sure I shall not.

OLYMP. And I will take sure measures to prevent your doing so to the Countess. Our present interview is over, sir; but as I think it fitting, mindful of the honour intended me by your master, to write my own answer to him, if you will return or send to the palace in one half hour, I will have one prepared. (LEONI bows, she salutes—Exit LEONI, L.) That malicious girl has been the cause of all this! she threatened me, and in some way has entrapped him, and urged him to apply to me, to mortify and humiliate me—let her look to the consequences! Exit, R.

Re-enter GIULIA hurriedly, and CESARIO, L. 1 E.

GIULIA. Oh, St. Agnes, St. Ursula, St. Somebody, come to my assistance! What can I do? Never did a mischievous girl get into such a dilemma!

CESAR. But what have you done?

GIULIA. Oh, mischief enough to furnish all the Maids of Honour in the kingdom; but tell me first how you learnt this terrible secret.

CESAR. Why, I told you I had been attractive enough to bewilder several ladies of the Court, and now one of them, and a very pertinacious one, has succeeded in turning the head of one of the gentlemen of the Savoy Embassy, and he in confidence told it to her; she, very worthy of confidence, lost no time in divulging it to me, and I, as became a faithful husband, brought the news at once to you.

GIULIA. Oh, if I ever tell fibs again! I gave him such a character of the Duchess, as would alarm a whole army of Counts and Princes, and to conclude all, told him she was in love with you!

CESAR. With me? Oh mercy, let me get into my petticoats again!

GIULIA. Yes; and then to mend matters, he made proposals to me!

CESAR. And you listened! Oh, faithless Giulia, to give away your loving husband elect, and then throw yourself into the arms of another! Oh, you girls, what a horrid set you are!

GIULIA. Oh, don't banter now, Laura, my head swims and my heart beats so. I don't know where I am, or what I do, or where I am going, or what I'm going to do.

CESAR. Well, I do; I'm going to forswear doublet and hose, and take the shortest road back to Padua.

GIULIA. What would you desert me in my need?—hush!—the Duchess!

Re-enter OLYMPIA, R.

OLYMP. Ha! Count Cesario; I command you to quit Carrara within twenty-four hours, and never set foot here again! No reply, sir, but go!

GIULIA. Oh, cousin, you will never——

OLYMP. Silence, madam! Go, sir, at once!

CESAR. (*bows—aside*) Well, this is one way of showing her love for me at any rate. *Exit, L.*

OLYMP. And you, graceless, artful, and ungrateful as you are, what have you to say for your conduct?

GIULIA. Madam, I know of no conduct which could warrant such epithets. (*aside*) What can she have discovered?

OLYMP. Forbear to add hypocrisy to perfidy. I remember your threat of this morning, but deemed it in jest, little dreaming that so young a heart could harbour so much malice and treachery——

GIULIA. Indeed, madam—I——

OLYMP. Did or did not the Count Leoni make overtures of love to you?

GIULIA. (*aside*) Can he have spoken to her? (*aloud*) Madam, he did—but I took them, as I believed them to be, in mere jest.

OLYMP. Is falsehood also one of your qualities? I know that you urged him to appeal to me, to gratify your vanity and to wound mine; but no more shall you indulge your malice at Carrara. You may follow your boy lover for aught I care, but never enter my presence again—the sight of you is odious to me; and take back this ring I have worn for love of you, and now reject with scorn and disgust!

Throws ring down and exit, R.

GIULIA. Olympia, dear Olympia, this is shocking! but it's no use crying. I must undo my mischief if I can. Let me think—I have it—I've a good mind to tell her all: no—if I can make matters smooth again (*picks up ring*)—for I now know she loves him—and then provide a little amusement for her, all will be well again. I know Laura has a magnificent suit she brought with her, so I must put a good face on the matter, and get out of my troubles the best way I can—ah! he is here.

Re-enter LEONI, L. 1 E.

LEONI. I am here, madam, simply to receive a letter from the Duchess. I regret to say her highness has seen fit to refuse me the liberty to address you.

GIULIA. What? You asked her! (*aside*) I see it all now. St. Agnes! no wonder she was in a jealous fury. (*aloud*) How on earth could you do such a thing?

LEONI. You did not forbid me.

GIULIA. How, how could I forbid you to do a thing I never thought you mad enough to dream of? A word in your ear, Count. The Duchess refused the Prince your master, because she loved the Count his envoy.

LEONI. Love me? impossible!

GIULIA. Nothing is impossible for a Duchess of Carrara.

LEONI. I cannot believe it—and flattered as I might be—after the character you gave me of her.

GIULIA. Ha! ha! I'm somewhat given to strong terms. When I said she was capricious, I meant that her caprice made her prefer a Count to a Prince. When I said she was haughty, of course, I meant a proper pride of station; profuse of money—I meant in works of charity; extravagant—I meant in the encouragement of all princely arts. And when I said that she was addicted to pleasure, I meant the pleasure of doing good.

LEONI. You can use a two-edged sword, I see, madam; but you mentioned a certain Count——

GIULIA. Are you not one?

LEONI. Of Padua.

GIULIA. Pshaw! not a Count of Padua; a Count of Savoy.

LEONI. But you also said he was a lover of yours.

GIULIA. (*archly*) Well, and did you not profess to be so?

LEONI. But my professions came after your account.

GIULIA. Yes, but I knew you were going to make them. If a man has two eyes and knows how to use them, a girl must be a fool if she doesn't know what he's going to say. Now, tell me truly—do you love the Duchess?

LEONI. How can I reply after my language to you, madam?

GIULIA. Oh, never mind me, I'm used to it—having heard it for the last three years; besides, I'm betrothed.

LEONI. Then I may venture to say that I love the Duchess dearly.

GIULIA. Good; and as a proof that you are not indifferent to her, she sent you this ring in token of her forgiveness.

LEONI. (*putting on ring*) Then my happiness is assured.

GIULIA. She will doubtless join you directly. Be bold, and press your suit without fear; I dare not stay, for she is justly angry with me, and on your account. Again I say be bold, and may you prosper. (*aside*) Now for my own little plan; trick for trick is fair warfare in Carrara, if nowhere else in the world. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

LEONI. At last, then, I obtain what my morbid fancy has sickened for so long—woman's love, without the alloy of woman's vanity and self interest. I am loved for myself, not for my——

Enter OLYMPIA, C. from R.

OLYMP. (*coldly*) Count Leoni, I bring you my answer to the Prince of Savoy, together with your own credentials, (*lays them on table*) and wish you a safe, pleasant, and speedy journey back to Savoy. (*going*)

LEONI. Stay, madam, I entreat you. (*aside*) What an incomprehensible woman it is. (*aloud*) I fear I was guilty of some rudeness to your highness recently; I acknowledge my error, and——

OLYMP. (*haughtily*) A Duchess of Carrara can recognise no rudeness from a Count of Savoy.

LEONI. (*aside*) The little Maid of Honour was right—haughty with a vengeance.

OLYMP. Is that all, Count Leoni?

LEONI. No, madam—I was imprudent enough to——

OLYMP. (*calmer*) Apply for the hand of my maid of honour; I see no imprudence in the matter. A Count is a fitting match for a Countess; but I disapproved, that is all.

LEONI. Ah, madam, it was despair that urged me to make it; had I dared to lift my thoughts so high, there is but one lady in Carrara, or in the world, I could wish to live or die for.

OLYMP. (*aside*) I cannot, sure, mistake him now. (*aloud*) You must speak plainer, Count, to be understood.

LEONI. I thought I spoke plainly enough, madam.

OLYMP. Then my comprehension must be dull. I know of no lady of my Court too high for your thoughts. (*aside*) Fool! fool!

LEONI. Ah, madam, then——

OLYMP. (*coldly*) Excepting one!

LEONI. (*aside*) The little Maid of Honour was wrong—she cannot love me—and yet this ring emboldens me to speak.

OLYMP. And so, Count Leoni, farewell !

LEONI. Ah, madam, do not go, I pray you ! You cannot misunderstand me—you feel that it is yourself for whom I entertained that mad and hopeless love.

OLYMP. Count—this language !—

LEONI. Can be justified only by my passion and your perfection ; answer me, madam : and if I err in the hope that you can return my love, I leave you on the instant—give me but one word of hope, and, be Savoy overwhelmed with ruin, my home is in Carrara.

OLYMP. (*aside*) Where is my pride now ? (*aloud*) Leave me, Count Leoni, I beg—I command you.

LEONI. Not without one word of hope and promise.

OLYMP. But the Countess D'Estrella !

LEONI. Do not name her, madam ; to her I owe this last sad hour. I should have spoken to your highness before, had she not told me that—you loved another.

OLYMP. I ! audacious, wretched girl !

LEONI. A Count Cesario.

OLYMP. I, love the boy Count of Padua ! (*aside*) She shall dearly answer this, and her confederate too. (*aloud*) Count, could you believe it ?

LEONI. It was folly to do so, but jealousy makes us blind and credulous, Then, madam, you do not take all hope from me ; oh ! answer me. (*takes her hand*)

OLYMP. Count Leoni, I am no weak and frivolous coquette ; and can confess when—(*sees ring on his finger—aside*)—as I live, he wears Giulia's ring ! (*aloud—throwing his hand from her*) Insolent, dishonourable coward, quit my sight for ever !

LEONI. (*aghast*) Your highness ! (*aside*) Mad, by St. Dominic !

OLYMP. You dare to insult me with words of love, and wear your worthless minion's ring upon your hand !

LEONI. Madam, the Countess D'Estrella brought this ring to me from your highness.

OLYMP. Do not let me have to charge you with falsehood as well as cowardice ! but that can speedily be seen—(*rings, PAGE appears, L.*) Let the Countess D'Estrella attend me at once, —and bring hither, under guard, the Count Cesario, of Padua.

Exit PAGE, L.

Depend upon it, Count Leoni, no man passes two wanton insults on Olympia of Carrara, in one day, with impunity.

LEONI. Could I be guilty of passing one on your highness intentionally, I should deserve rack and gibbet—

OLYMP. You may attain to both, sir. I have no more to say at present. (*retires up*)

LEONI. A plague upon that little Maid of Honour ; she seems the very spirit incarnate of mischief.

Re-enter PAGE, with CESARIO and GUARDS, L.

PAGE. The Countess D'Estrella, your highness, is nowhere to be found.

OLYMP. She has fled, to escape the fury she has aroused. You have arranged this affair ill, sir Count, and if you would have me credit your tale now, produce this missing witness of your assertion. I have no doubt I could discover her hiding place?

LEONI. Your highness is most unjust!

OLYMP. You will find me very just, sir, to your cost! Place the Count Leoni under arrest!—

LEONI. Madam, I claim the privilege of my mission? I am Envoy here!

OLYMP. And I—am *Mistress*—here! (GUARDS arrest LEONI) And now for you, young sir. To whom am I indebted for the flattering report that I was in love with you?

CESAR. Upon my word, madam, I do not know. To that gentleman, perhaps—(*pointing to LEONI*)

LEONI. What, boy?—

OLYMP. Aye, it may be so, indeed. I cannot think that Giulia, base as she is, would be guilty of inventing so absurd a story.

CESAR. Absurd enough in all conscience! what would be the use of being in love with me?

OLYMP. What, indeed! The Countess D'Estrella will not escape a severe punishment; but for you, Count, it will be sufficient to keep you for a month without your bon-bons and playthings.

CESAR. If you were a man, madam, instead a woman, you would find I carried a sharp plaything at my side here—(*touching sword*) which would spoil your highness's taste for bon bons, for some time to come.

OLYMP. You are somewhat saucy, sir!

Enter BARON, L.

BARON. I have to announce to you, that Prince Louis of Savoy, has arrived in person, (LEONI starts) and craves audience with your highness.

OLYMP. Admit him at once.

Exit BARON, L.

LEONI. (*aside*) What fooling is here?

OLYMP. (*to LEONI*) Now, sir, I can leave to your master the office of punishing your offences.

LEONI. Madam—

OLYMP. Peace, sir, the prince is here!

Enter BARON, conducting GUILIA magnificently dressed as Prince Louis; attended by some ladies disguised as COURTIERs—She advances and kisses OLYMPIA'S hand, L.

LEONI. (*aside*) What means this mummary?

OLYMP. You are welcome, Prince!

CESAR. (*aside*, R.) Positively, she makes nearly as good a man as I do.

GIULIA. (L. C.) I rejoice to hear you say so, madam, as I may hope that my suit is not wholly unwelcome. My envoy has possessed you of my hopes?

OLYMP. (R. C.) He has, Prince; but I grieve you did not send one fitter for his office.

GIULIA. What! has he ventured to treat your highness with want of courtesy—where is he?

OLYMP. Your highness will pardon me, if I have been compelled to place him under arrest; it was from no lack of respect to the Prince of Savoy.

GIULIA. Will you be pleased to send for him, madam?

OLYMP. He is before you, Prince.

GIULIA. Where? that gentleman, without his sword; you are merry, madam, he is no envoy of mine.

OLYMP. What! an impostor too!

LEONI. (L.) By heaven! this is beyond bearing. (*aloud*) Madam, the impostor is at your side—who he may be, I know not, but I *do* know, he is *not* Louis of Savoy.

OLYMP. Insolent!

GIULIA. Yes, tolerably so, I admit—to tell a gentleman to his face, that he is not himself. Perhaps you'll be good enough to tell me who I am?

LEONI. Some page probably, who has stolen his master's clothes.

OLYMP. Shall I have this scurrilous man removed, Prince?

GIULIA. Oh, dear no—he's rather amusing—and so this strange creature, actually persuaded you that he was the envoy of Prince Louis of Savoy—did he?

OLYMP. I now blush to find myself the dupe of so shallow a trickster.

LEONI. (*aside*) Oh, patience! (*aloud*) To this young impostor, I deign no answer—but to you, madam, and for your satisfaction only—I refer to my credentials.

GIULIA. Ah! credentials—may I see them?

OLYMP. They are here, Prince.

GIULIA. (*looking at them*) I thought so—this is not my handwriting!

LEONI. No, I'll be sworn it is not!

GIULIA. Pray now, madam, what may be the penalty in your highness's dominions for forgery?

OLYMP. The halter!

LEONI. (*aside*) Heaven! must I bear this—oh, my rash and foolish vow, I *cannot* clear myself.

GIULIA. Well, let him stand aside—amusing as he is, I am rather tired of him.

LEONI. Will your highness pardon me—there are many gentlemen in my suite, who *know* the Prince—may I send for them?

OLYMP. With the Prince's permission.

GIULIA. Oh, certainly let this eccentric gentleman, manage matters entirely to his own satisfaction.

BARON. (*to LEONI, L. C.*) You will remember, sir, that by your directions, the whole suite rode forward to Avenza—an hour or two since.

LEONI. (*aside*) Cursed mishap! (*aloud*) True, I had forgotten—but stay—I ordered one to remain—the Count de Brissac—let him be fetched. *Exit PAGE, L.*

OLYMP. I am afraid one witness will hardly suffice, sir.

GIULIA. (*to CESARIO*) What! is it possible? my dear friend Cesario, of Padua—why did you not present yourself before? (*aside to her*) All is well: Rosa will take care of De Brissac.

CESAR. I dared not, sir; I am under her highness's displeasure.

GIULIA. Then I am sure as the first favour I ask the Duchess of Carrara, she will grant me your pardon.

OLYMP. Very freely, Prince!

CESAR. But there is one whose pardon would be more precious than my own—my beloved Giulia d'Estrella!

GIULIA. Giulia d'Estrella—ah! I have heard you speak of her—a very amiable, affectionate, and sensible girl—surely she can have done no wrong.

OLYMP. I grieve to say, Prince, she has offended me deeply.

GIULIA. Ah! madam, if I might hope for two favours in one hour. Grant me her pardon for my friend Cesario?

OLYMP. Well, Prince, I cannot refuse you.

GIULIA. And now to the chief, and dearest object of my visit. May I hope that notwithstanding the prejudice against me, caused by this *envoy* of mine, you will deign to accept the hand I offer you?

LEONI. Madam, I cannot allow you to be the dupe of this scandalous imposition.

OLYMP. You talk of dupes—for shame, sir; be silent, if you even have the decency for *that*!

GIULIA. Yes, sir, be silent; or we may find an unpleasant means of making you so.

Re-enter PAGE, L.

PAGE. The Count de Brissac can be nowhere heard of, your highness!

LEONI. (*aside*) Confusion! then am I hemmed in, indeed.

OLYMP. I though not—now hear me, Count Leoni, or whoever you may be—the weakness past—killed by your baseness, I will no longer conceal that I loved you.

LEONI. Oh, madam, if I—

OLYMP. Be silent, sir. His highness of Savoy, will not think the worse of me for my candour—it is over—Prince, my hand!

LEONI. (*aside*) What to do—I must break my oath; or my heart.

GIULIA. Madam, I take it with the profoundest respect; and with only one regret—which is a bitter one—that I cannot keep it.

LEONI. (*aside*) Ah, I breathe again!

OLYMP. (*haughtily*) How, Prince! is every Savoyard gentleman educated to insult a lady?

GIULIA. No, madam—but you confess to a prior attachment, to the object of which I resign you. (*passing her to LEONI*)

LEONI. (*aside*) What can this mean?

OLYMP. Sir! this is the most——

GIULIA. Sensible, and affectionate thing; that I could do—and always remember, that it is to your banished cousin—(*removing cap*) that you owe the hand of—PRINCE LOUIS OF SAVOY. There take her, Prince, and don't stare at me so, for mercy's sake!

OLYMP. I am amazed! you Prince Louis?

LEONI. Madam, forgive me my deceit—a foolish oath that I would endeavour to earn your love, without disclosing my name, has led to all this—but how happy the end! Countess D'Estrella, you have played me a sad trick.

GIULIA. Did not your highness play us all a trick? Olympia, you have forgiven me, you know!

OLYMP. I have, dear Giulia; and freely give you leave to wed your Cesario.

GIULIA. Thank you—perhaps as I might be preventing a more suitable arrangement for Cesario—allow me to present one. I could not think of robbing the gentlemen of Carrara of my dearest friend, Laura D'Urbino!

OLYMP. What—am I living in a world of disguises?

CESARIO. Yes, madam, be quite sure of that—but for me, I shall be too glad to resume my sex's privilege, and out-flirt this evening every lady in Carrara.

LEONI. But what can we do for our little representative here?

GIULIA. Oh, pray don't do anything for me; and above all things, don't get me a husband—please to let me alone, and let me remain—(*comes forward*) (of course with our friend's permission) as I am, a gay—careless—though I fear, somewhat mischievous, “Maid of Honour.”

Curtain.

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Sylvester Dagger-wood	Douglas Travestie	Gaspard Hauser, the Idiot Boy	Double-bedded Room [Floor	The Secret Crock of Gold
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School for Scandal	Frederick of Prussia	Mountaineers	Ambassador's Lady [fast	Done on both sides
Paul Pry	Woman's the Devil	Death Plank	Wedding Break-	Damon & Pythias
Frankenstein	Dice of Death	Iron Chest	Moral Philosopher	Marguerite's Colours [Joke
Bear Hunters	Wapping Old Stairs	Behind the Scenes	Railroad Trip	A Devilish Good
Forty Thieves	Whistler	Ben the Boatswain	My Wife's Come	Bedroom Window
Lovers' Quarrels	Back Domino	Lady of Lambythe	Meg Murnock	Old Honesty
Black-eyed Susan	Maiden's Fame	Love's Labour's Lost	Lesson for Gentlemen	Jonathan [dies
Forest of Bondy	Jacket of Blue	Jack Shepherd	Old Curiosity Shop	Nice Young La-
Warlock of the Glen	New Way to Pay Old Debts	Beggar's Opera	King Richard ye Third	Going to the Derby
Maid of Genoa	Negro of Wapping	Therese	Young Scamp	Tutor's Assistant
Idiot Witness	Oliver Twist	Good Night's Rest	Mistaken Story	Poor Pillicoddy
Intrigue	Monsieur Jacques	Poor Gentleman	Whitefriars	Founded on Facts
Cherry Bounce	The Tempter	Faint Heart never won Fair Lady	Post of Honour	Midnight Watch
Dead Shot	Love and Charity	A Night in the Bastille	The Polka	Lost Ship
Dominique	Charming Polly	Duenna	Momentous Question	Roman Actor
Miller's Maid	Crown Prince	Bandit of the Blind Mine	Milliners' Holiday	Brigands in the Bud
Fortune's Frolic	Little Sins and Pretty Sinners	My Lord is not my Lord	Wilful Murder	Lost Diamonds
Is he Jealous?	Gasparde the Gondolier	Michael Erle	Mysteries of Paris	The Trumpeter's Wedding
Melmoth the Wanderer	Dream of Fate	A Close Siege	Don Cesar de Bazan	Sixteen String Jack
Captain Stevens	Pacha's Pets	Miller of Mans-	Young England	Separate Maintenance
Jonathan Bradford	Self Accusation	Rivals [field	Review [ding	Mother's Bequest
Ellen Wareham	Jacques Strop	Double Gallant	Corporal's Wed-	Manager in Dis-
Nabob for an Hour	Blue Jackets	Clandestine Marriage	House Dog [pole	trepreneur
Rake's Progress	Day Well Spent	Pink of Politeness	Margaret Catch-	Gipsy Farmer
Turning the Tables	Louise	Bamboozling	Smoked Miser	Chamber Practice
Blue Devils	Lord Darnley	Like Father, like Son	Widow Bewitched	Royal Red Book
Frank Fox Phipps	Wren Boys	Englishmen in India	Another Glass	The Bottle
Rendezvous	Ambassadors	Temple of Death	King and I	Unprotected Female
Tom Cringle	Delicate Attentions	Road Station	Mrs. Caudle's	Turnpike Gate
Peter Bell	What have I done?	Robespierre	Curtain Lecture	Nell Gwynne
Damp Beds	Jealousy	White Milliner	Powder and Ball	Three Cuckoos
Seven Clerks	The Brothers Farinelli	Sergeant's Wedding [missed	Mrs. Caudle, or	Princes
Unfinished Gentleman	Rape of the Lock	Fairly hit & fairly	Curtain Lectures (Princess's)	Adam Buff
Robert Macaire	Virginus the Rum-un	Innkeeper's Daughter	Love in Livery	Friend Wagglee
Day in Paris	Faith & Falsehood	My Wife's Dentist	Lodgings for Single Gentlemen	Not to be Done
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Mountain Sylph	No Followers	Cousin Peter	Phantom Break-	Sent to the Tower
Beau Nash	The Assignment	Windmill	Lend me 5s. [fast	Allow me to Apologize
Catching an Heiress	King John Travestie	Bathing	Done Brown	Temptation
Station House	A Quiet Day	Meet me by Moonlight	On the Tiles	Teacher Taught
Hazard of the Die	Sudden Thoughts	New Footman	Irish Tiger	Greek Slave
Hunting a Turtle	Black Domino—(Opera)	Lucky Stars	Sister and I	Bould Soger Boy
Spirit of the Rhine	Pascal Bruno	Boots at the Swan	Loan of a Wife	Azaël the Prodigal
Jewess	King's Wager	Norma Travestie	Weaver of Lyons	Robert the Bruce
Widow's Victim	Wanted a Brigand	Cousin Lambkin	Advice to Husband	Ragged School
Old and Young	I and my Double 'Tis She	My Valet and I	Barber and Bravo	Last of the Fairies
Stager	Conquering Game	Antony and Cleopatra (Farce)	Mrs. Harris	Scarlet Mantle
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Othello Travestie	Fairy Lake		Rival Sergeants	Wellington and Waterloo
Man about Town	John Bull		Rag Picker of Paris	The Gold Fiend
Farmer's Story	Loves of Lord Bateman		Who do they take me for? [moor	Old Adam
Mrs. White			Bride of Lammer-	
Middy Ashore			Out on the Sly	
State Secrets			Who's my Husband?	
Minerali				
Mummy				
Rent Day				

Wooler (J. P.)

A MAN WITHOUT A HEAD.

A FARCE,

In One Act.

BY J. P. WOOLER, Esq.

Author of "Love in Livery."

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OF CHARACTERS, ETC.

LONDON:
WILLIAM BARTH, BRYDGES STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.

Copy of Original Bill.

FIRST PRODUCED AT THE PRINCESS'S THEATRE,

On Monday, October 6th, 1845.

Gen. Res, 24th 1845, 1846

<i>Mr. Oblivious Top</i>	Mr. Compton.
<i>Tom Featherstone</i>,	Mr. Roxby.
<i>William</i>	Mr. Henry.
<i>Mrs. Oblivious Top</i>	Mrs. Brougham.
<i>Kate Huntley</i> ...	Miss Honner.
<i>Lucy</i>	Miss Somers.

TO THE

MANAGERS OF THE PROVINCIAL THEATRES.

All applications for permission to produce this Farce in the Provincial theatres, to be made to the Author's agent, Mr. W. Barth, 4, Brydges Street, Covent Garden. Any manager producing it, without first obtaining a "Written Permission" to do so, will render himself liable to the penalty prescribed by the Act of Parliament, which will be strictly enforced in every case.

Scenery and Properties.

SCENE. I.—Handsome Apartment, with two doors in F., O. P. and P. S.—2nd Grooves.

SCENE II.—Same as Scene 1.—Keys in doors, R. and L. F.

SCENE I.—Couch, c.—Table, and bell on it.—Chairs, Newspaper, Riding whip.

SCENE II.—Half-a-sovereign.—Half-a-crown.

SCENE III. Same as Scene 1.—Pistols.

Costumes.

TOP. Blue body coat, metal buttons, red and black velvet waistcoat, nankeen trousers, rather short, with long straps.

TOM. Black coat, white waistcoat and trousers.

WILLIAM. Plain waiter's suit.

MRS. TOP. Riding habit and hat.

KATE. Pink coloured silk dress, bonnet and shawl.

LUCY. Chambermaid's dress.

Time, 45 minutes.

A MAN WITHOUT A HEAD.

SCENE 1.—*Mr. Top's Apartment in an Hotel at London.*
Two closets at back.

TOM FEATHERSTONE *discovered, reading the paper.* *Couch*
C.; table L., bell on it.

Tom. Not here yet. Confound the fellow! Makes an appointment at twelve, now it's one. If he's here by two or three, I suppose I may consider myself lucky, or if he comes at all. I lay my life he's forgotten it as usual altogether.—Hang me, if I'd be the Pope of Rome himself with such a memory. (*Rings bell.*)

Enter WILLIAM, L.

What time do you think it probable Mr. Oblivious Top will make his appearance?

Will. Can't say, I'm sure, sir.

Tom. When did he go out?

Will. He invited two gentlemen to breakfast with him at eleven, sir, and he went out about ten.

Tom. He frequently commits these little agreeable blunders, does he not?

Will. Fifty times at least since he has been in the hotel. Last night, sir, he ordered his carriage round to take Mrs. Top to the Opera, and whilst she was sitting in it waiting for him, he strolled out, called a cab, and drove heaven knows where!

Tom. Ha! ha! and only married a week. However, let me know when he returns.

Will. Yes, sir!

[*Exit, L.*

Tom. What an unaccountable creature it is—compounded of the very mud of the river Lethe. If it was possible for any man to forget he was married, I'll be hanged if I think Top would know whether he had a wife or not! Hark!

his step, I'll swear. Can he really remember he had an appointment?

Enter MR. OBLIVIOUS TOP, L.

Ha! Top, my dear fellow.

Top. My dear Tom! But you must really excuse me at present, I feel pretty certain that I had an appointment at some time—with somebody—somewhere—but as I couldn't for the life of me remember what, or where, I just came home to see if anybody could tell me.

Tom. Why, you can't surely forget, my dear Top, it was with me—me at twelve, and now it's one.

Top. Was it with you? Of course, I remember now; how absurd. But I beg a hundred pardons.

Tom. Don't mention it—but I'm dying to speak to you of Kate.

Top. Kate?—who?

Tom. Pshaw! Kate Huntley, your father's ward.

Top. Oh!—aye!—well?

Tom. Tell me, how did you succeed with the old gentleman yesterday?

Top. What old gentleman?

Tom. Did you not promise to intercede for me with your father, and further, if possible, my suit with Kate?

Top. Did I?—well, d'ye know, I'm afraid it slipped my memory.

Tom. It's impossible that you have deceived me in this way.

Top. My dear Tom, I'm very sorry, but I'll be hanged if I interchanged a word with the old man yesterday, except when he abused me for going somewhere—or doing something, or *not* going somewhere, or *not* doing something—I can't say which.

Tom. I cannot suspect you of wilfully neglecting your promise; but if you knew how intolerably in love I am, and how much I depended on you for assistance, you would endeavour to remember such a trifle for a few hours, or excuse my irritation on finding myself so soon forgotten.

Top. My dear Tom, I'm very sorry, but it must have been a mere accident, and a day can't much signify. I'll bore the old man to death for you to-day.

Tom. (*Aside.*) I'm sure you will forget me. (*Aloud.*) I'll trust you; and, as ill-luck would have it, I had a slight tiff with Kate last night. All nonsense—lovers' quarrels, you know. This morning she had a headache of course—couldn't see me. Will you take an opportunity of giving her this letter. (*Gives letter.*)

Tom. Oh, certainly.

Tom. By-the-bye, how's Mrs. Top?

Top. 'Pon my word, I don't know. I think she said she was very well. And now I think of it, it strikes me I had to get something—or go somewhere—or call on somebody for her—but I completely forget.

Tom. You ought to be proud of that woman, *Top.*

Top. So I am, I suppose—but, my dear *Tom*, it's just entered my head—pity me, for I've fallen desperately in love.

Tom. What, and just married?

Top. Fact; and the best of the joke is, it's with a married woman. I know it's somebody's wife. It may be my own I'm in love with—but I can't at this moment recollect exactly whose—but I was telling myself of it last night.

Tom. My dear fellow—It's your own wife.

Top. I don't know, but I don't think it's her—because, I think I remember that I married her out of spite.

Tom. Indeed?

Top. Yes, you see, I was in love with—with—dear me! You know her—pshaw! Kate, of course!

Tom. What?

Top. Don't interrupt me, or you'll put me out. Well, one day, I was walking with—no, by-the-bye, I think I was riding—well, that doesn't matter—with young—what's his name? no, no, it was captain—no, it couldn't be him—however, I was either walking or riding with somebody—and we met Kate, and she either laughed at him, or laughed at me—or—no, by-the-bye, I think it was *my father* we met—at all events, somehow, something was done by somebody, somewhere, that disgusted me, and, so I wouldn't marry her—and I swore I'd marry the first woman that would have me. Then, I met somebody, and I remember marrying her.

Tom. Yes, I should think you *might* remember that, without much difficulty.

Mrs. T. (*Without*, 2 E. R.) Where is he—it's abominable.

Top. That's *Mrs. Top's* voice. I'm convinced, I've been doing something wrong.

Tom. Very likely.

Enter MRS. TOP, in riding habit, whip, &c. 2 E., R.

Mrs. T. (*Sharply.*) Now, I ask you, *Mr. Top*—good morning, *Mr. Featherstone*—Now, I ask you, sir, if your conduct isn't scandalous—abominable, beyond all calculation, infamous?

Top. I've no doubt it is? my dear, if you say so—but I can't myself call to mind any portion of it that deserves—

Tom. (*Aside.*) A storm coming, I'll be off. (*Aloud.*) You'll excuse me, *Top*, for five minutes—I'll return. You'll walk with me to the club, I hope?

Top. With pleasure—shall we go at once?

Tom. In ten minutes. *Mrs. Top*, your servant!

[*Exit, L.*

Mrs. T. Are you aware, sir, that you have been keeping me waiting, in this dress, for the last hour and a half?

Top. What for, my dear?

Mrs. T. Didn't you propose that we should ride round the Park?

Top. That was yesterday, my love, wasn't it?

Mrs. T. Oh, *Top*, *Top*, you'll be the death of me with that memory of yours! It was this morning, sir; but let that pass. Have you leisure for one or two remarks?

Top. For one or two dozen, my dear, if you wish it. May I offer you a chair.

[*Places back of chair to her, she points to it, he turns it, and then sits in it—discovers his mistake, and placing chairs. They sit.*

Mrs. T. I am far from satisfied with your conduct, Mr. *Top*.

Top. I'm sorry for that—may I venture to ask for the objectionable clauses?

Mrs. T. Do you happen to recollect that you were at the opera, last night?

Top. I do *not* recollect it, my dear—but if you say so—

Mrs. T. I have been told, sir, of your chatting to a lady there; do you recollect *that*?

Top. Really, my love, my memory is so very—

Mrs. T. *Convenient*, sir. May I ask at what hour you went to bed last night, or this morning?

Top. Certainly, my dear, it was—let me see—hem! dear me, my memory is certainly going very strangely—it was—pshaw! I can't remember, but I'll enquire. (*Rings bell.*)

Enter WILLIAM.

William—What was I going to ask him?—oh, what time did I go to bed, last night?

Mrs. T. Or this morning, William? And try and tell the truth, William.

Top. Don't hesitate, William; tell the precise truth. I'm ther anxious to know myself.

Will. Am I to tell the truth, sir?

Top. Of course, William,—of course.

Will. Well then, sir, *you never went to bed at all!*

Top. No more I did—I thought it was very strange I couldn't remember what time it was. That will do, William.

[*Exit William, L.*

Mrs. T. Are you not ashamed, sir, to treat me in this infamous manner? Is this fulfilling the vows you made to me at the altar? Is this the entertainment you led me to expect, when you lay at my feet for hours, swearing eternal love, constancy, and devotion? Is this the—

Top. Let me caution you, my dear, against any long or prosy speeches. You'll recollect I haven't been to sleep all night.

Mrs. T. Your affected levity, sir, shall not shield you from my just anger. Is it so light a thing, in your mind, to treat a wife with levity and contempt. Am I to be insulted, and in the face of my dearest friends be derided and disgraced? No, sir, hope it not—nor believe that—

Top. My dear life—if you really *will* go on, would you

favour me by setting the music of your voice in a lower key?

Mrs. T. You unfeeling—barbarous—*man!* I can call you nothing more low or miserable!

Top. (*Drowsily.*) Try husband, my dear! (*Goes up and sits at table, L.*)

Mrs. T. Monster! Have you exhausted all of the love you possessed? No one kind word or deed left of that store you swore to me was endless? Have I so totally changed in one short week, that none of the charms are left that once won your admiration? But you have a father, sir—a just and worthy man—who knows the difference between right and wrong, whatever notions his son may have on the subject—and you shall be made to feel the authority of a father, sir. If you will not listen to the entreaties of a wife—what! I have silenced you? Your tongue refuses to defend your infamy! You are silent, are you?

[*Top, who has been going to sleep during this speech, snores here.*]

Grant me patience! Oh, if I had known it would come to this?

Enter KATE HUNTLEY, L.

Oh, my dear Kate, pity me. Do you see this sleeping monster?

Kate. Clearly. (*Crosses to c.*)

Mrs. T. (*R.*) Would you believe it, he actually fell asleep during the first *really* impressive speech I have made him.

Kate. He's fallen a victim to *first impressions*. I suppose the subject was uninteresting.

Mrs. T. I dare say it was this morning; but it was quite another thing last night. You won't credit it, but he was amusing himself last night on the stage of the Opera.

Kate. Is it possible?

Mrs. T. True; and actually asked the person to call on him; which, I dare say she'd have done, if, with his usual talent, he hadn't forgotten to give her his address.

Kate. Pray, how did you hear all this?

Mrs. T. Young Fitzwilliam told me; and, it's just occurred to me, you can do me a favour. He, of course, forgets altogether whether he gave her his address or not, though, it's just possible, the wretch remembers he asked her to come. Now, he would no more recognise you, than he would his great-grandfather. I wish you'd oblige me by playing this girl's part for half-an-hour, just to expose the monster. Will you?

Kate. With all the pleasure in life. My quarrel with Tom has taken all my love business off my hands, and so I've leisure for anything.

Mrs. T. Thanks, my dear Kate; and let it be done at once, will you?

Kate. I'll just run and fetch a shawl, bonnet, and veil, and wake him directly from his dreams to a pleasant *tete-a-*

tete. How long will you give us? Don't hurry, because it may chance to be agreeable,

Mrs. T. I don't know whether I'm doing right. Oh, ten minutes at most.

Kate. That's very little, but we must make the most of it. [*Exit, L.*

Mrs. T. I have my suspicion. In the company of another woman, Top might forget that he is a married man. I must remember to keep him continually in mind of it. Kate's pretty. Sleep on in peace, Top, till you wake, and if you then wake as I expect, the peace won't last very long. [*Exit, R. 2 E.*

Enter WILLIAM, L.

Will. This is very strange, Mr. Top inviting ladies here; but I must deliver my message. Asleep, eh? Mr. Top—sir—Mr. Top! (*Shaking him.*)

Top. (*Half asleep.*) Eh? what?—go to sleep, Mrs. Top, and don't annoy me.

Will. Mr. Top! Sir!

Top. You're a stupid woman—Mrs. Top—go to sleep.

Will. It's me, sir—William, sir.

Top. Then do me the favour of going to the devil, William. I shan't get up.

Will. There's a lady wants you.

Top. Eh? bless me, I thought I was in bed. I was rather too comfortable too. What is it, sir?

Will. There's a lady, sir, desires to see you directly.

Top. A what?

Will. A lady, sir.

Top. Tell her I'm not at home. I can't have any women here. It isn't Mrs. Top, is it?

Will. No, sir, it's a strange lady.

Top. I can't see her. (*Crosses to R.*) I can't have any strange ladies here. What will Mrs. Top say? Send her away. [*Exit William, L.*

A lady want *me*!—funny!—where was I last night? Pshaw! What a head I've got! Didn't Mrs. Top say something about the Opera? I can't have been fool enough to—'pon my life though, I don't know: at least, I don't remember.

Kate. (*Without.*) Oh, nonsense! I know he is at home.

Enter KATE, veiled, L.

Top. (*Aside.*) It is a woman, sure enough.

Kate. Sir, I have performed my promise of calling on you, although by doing so I have put myself into great danger.

Top. (*Aside.*) So you have *me*! (*Aloud.*) Well, ma'am, and after the danger you've put yourself in on my account, may I ask what you want with me?

Kate. I am surprised, sir, at your asking me a question I should rather put to yourself. Do you not remember giving me your card on the stage of the Opera last evening?

Top. (Aside.) Top, you're an ass!

Kate. And begging me to call upon you to-day?

Top. (Aside.) Top, you're another? *(Aloud.)* I didn't give you *Mrs. Top's* card, did I?

Kate. What, is there a *Mrs. Top*?

Top. I'm sorry to say there is—young woman.

Kate. Why, you told me, last night, you were not married?

Top. (Aside.) Top—you turn out to be a bit of a liar!

Kate. If I had known *that*—you may depend I wouldn't have come.

Top. Well, then—ma'am—as you know it now, perhaps you'll go.

Kate. It strikes me you're playing with me, sir.

Top. Not at all—the fact is, I had been to the races—and when a man goes to the races, you know, he—

Kate. Why, you told me you were at Richmond all day.

Top. Well, then, I dare say I was. Yes, I think it was Richmond,—and when a man goes to Richmond, you know, he gets into temptation. In fact, I must own I had taken a trifle too much—that accounts for it.

Kate. I declare, I never saw a man so sober.

Top. Well, ma'am, if you won't take any of these excuses, I must insist on your going. I don't remember anything about it, and I can't have my domestic happiness interfered with. I have a reputation as a good husband—I also have an affectionate and dutiful wife. *(Aside.)* What lies this girl is making me tell. *(Aloud.)* And you must go—ma'am.

Kate. Sir, you're insulting me.

Top. You're wrong, ma'am. I'm ensuring you against mischief; for if *Mrs. Top* should come in—and I don't know *where* she is—you'd most probably have your face scratched. *(Aside.)* And I should certainly have mine.

Kate. Then let me tell you, Mr. Top, I *won't* go—sir! As you have thought proper to treat me in this manner, I choose to *stop*—and I shall see *Mrs. Top*, and tell her how her *good husband* treats his *affectionate and dutiful wife*!

Top. You're turning me topsy-turvey. My dear ma'am, consider the peace of a virtuous wife and small family.

Kate. Consider a fiddlestick!

Top. No taste for music. So I will, my dear ma'am, if you wish it, or—

Tom. (without, L.) Never mind. I shall see her.

Kate. (Aside.) Tom's voice, as I live.

Top. (Aside.) Featherstone, by all that's unlucky! *(Aloud.)* My dear, good, estimable young lady,—if that gentleman sees you, I'm ruined! Go, go, for heaven's sake.

Kate. (Aside.) I must be off somewhere. *(Aloud.)* Where can I go?

Top. Anywhere. Here, get into this closet.

Kate. (entering closet, R.) Get rid of him as quick as you can.

Top. (Solus.) My cursed memory!—but, hang me, if I ever carry my card-case again as long as I live.

Enter TOM FEATHERSTONE, L.

Tom. Eh? Where's Miss Huntley?

Top. How can I tell, my dear fellow. I haven't seen her to-day.

Top. Mr. Top, you'll excuse me, but I'm afraid that you feign a bad memory to cloak the most abominable practices. Your always forgetting to assist me with Miss Huntley confirms it. I fear, sir, you have the vilest designs on that young lady.

Top. I wish I may die, and be buried this afternoon, Tom, if I know what you mean.

Tom. What may you have been shut up with Kate the last half hour for?

Top. I! with Kate?

Tom. Aye, sir. I suppose you forget *that* now?

Top. No, indeed, my memory's very fresh at present, and Mr. Feath—what's your name—likely to remain so.

Tom. I say, Kate Huntley has been here with you.

Top. I say it's no such thing.

Tom. She was seen to come up.

Top. Who saw her go down?

Tom. My servant James.

Top. Call him up. (*Aside.*) As it isn't William, I don't care.

Tom. He's holding the horses at the door, but we'll go and ask him, if you like.

Top. With all my heart. (*Aside.*) Now, if that feline should come out of the closet, I'm done for. Stop, stop, I can't find my hat.

Tom. Why, you've got it on. Come along.

[*Exeunt, L.*

Enter MRS. TOP, R. 2 E.

Mrs. T. So, so, Top. Here, Kate. (*Kate comes from closet.*) Capital, I heard every syllable. You frightened him a little, I think.

Kate. I was beginning.

Mrs. T. Now he's sure to sneak away from Featherstone to get you away. Then comes my part—to expose him. You run into my bedroom there—I'll take your place in the closet. Quick, some one's coming. [*Exit into closet, R. F.*

Kate. Don't spare him.

[*Exit running, R. 2 E.*

Re-enter TOP, L.

Top. I shall get into a precious scrape here. That fellow James swears it was Kate. I've just slipped away from Tom to find William, who'll swear it wasn't. I'll then own

to the opera girl—who, lest she should come out before she's wanted—I shall take the liberty of locking in!

[*Creeps softly to the closet, locks the R. door, and pockets the key.*]

Tom. (*Within, L.*) Top, Top, I'm waiting for you. I shall not leave you, sir—I think you quite capable of bribing the man into an untruth!

Top. I'm coming, for I'm getting confused now. I'm beginning to forget all about it. Hang me! but I hardly know who I want to find, now!

[*Exeunt, L.*]

Re-enter KATE, R. 2 E.

Kate. Strange, I didn't hear Mrs. T's voice. Where can she be? Mrs. Top!

Mrs. T. (*Within.*) I can't open the door.

Kate. Push! (*Trying it.*) Why, it's locked.

Mrs. T. (*Knocking at it.*) Nonsense!

Kate. It is, and the key's gone!—hush! here's some one coming!

Re-enter TOP, L.

Top. Where can that fool William be? I'll sneak away now. Tom's in a flaming passion. Eh! I can't recollect exactly, but I think, I locked you up.

Kate. (*Aside.*) Ha, ha! poor Mrs. Top. (*Aloud.*) No, sir; I got frightened at hearing you talk so loud, that, when you left the room, I came out and hid in that room.

Top. (*Alarmed.*) Who was there?

Kate. No one.

Top. (*Aside.*) Thank heaven—Mrs. Top's bedroom.

(*Tom without, L.* “Mr. Top! Mr. Top!”)

Hark! here comes that fellow again. What's to be done with you? Here, get in the closet again. (*Trying it.*) Pshaw! it's locked. Now, who the deuce did that?

Kate. I'll go into the bedroom again.

Top. No, no. Damn it all—ha! here's another closet—in with you.

Kate. Don't lock me in though. [*Exit into closet.*]

Top. No, no—unless there's no key. (*Locks door and puts key in his pocket.*) Tom's coming, and now I'm off. I'll try and find a closet to lock myself up in. [*Exit, R.*]

Re-enter TOM, running, L.

Tom. Where the deuce is Top? I'll shoot him, if I live to catch him! Not here. Hid in his wife's bedroom, perhaps. It shall be no sanctuary for him. He has made free with my mistress, so a fig for all respect to his wife.

[*Exit running, R. 2 E.*]

SCENE 2.—*Corridor in the Hotel.**Enter TOP, R.*

Top. I've missed my way among these cursed lobbies, and passages, and holes. I've almost forgotten what all this precious disturbance is about, or what the row is—but I know I *am* in a row—and, if I recollect rightly, not very near getting out of it. I've some faint idea my wife's in it too. I know—at least, I'm pretty certain—I had a quarrel with her this morning. Then there was another woman—who was she? Mrs. Top said I had danced at the Opera—no, no, that *she* had danced at the Opera—or, there *was* some one from the Opera, who—at all events my memory's never very good—but for the last hour I've been so muddled and so confused by people saying they are *not* people—and other people saying that some people are other people—I locked some one up too—and some one was not locked up when she *was*. Well, I must be satisfied with the hope that somebody will turn out to be somebody at last. Who comes here now? That woman again?

Enter LUCY, L.

Lucy. Oh, Mr. Top—sir—I'm sure there's something wrong, sir—and I think it's my duty to tell you, sir.

Top. My good girl, you'll oblige me by not telling me *anything at all*. My head hasn't room for what I know already, and I *won't* know anything more. So, just put by what you know till to-morrow morning.

Lucy. It may be too late then, sir.

Top. So much the better, then: I shan't be obliged to hear it at all.

Lucy. Well, sir, I only thought it was very queer, that's all

Top. I tell you everything's very queer that I know anything about—and I'm getting confoundly queer myself.

Lucy. You'd be queer, sir, if you knew what I know.

Top. I see you won't let me rest till you tell me, so out with it. But I warn you, I shall forget it in a minute. By-the-bye, you don't come from the Opera, do you?

Lucy. La, no, sir! I come from Devizes. I'm chambermaid here.

Top. Well, then, chambermaid, as you've told me all you have to tell, you can go.

Lucy. La, sir, I haven't told you anything yet.

Top. Haven't you? Well, I thought you had. Be quick—(*aside*) for I know I want to get away from somebody or something.

Lucy. Well, sir,—then, as I was passing Mrs. Top's bedroom door—

Top. (*Aside.*) It's astonishing how well I recollect things when I get a hint; she's seen that plague of a woman.

(*Aloud.*) Well, my dear, don't say any more about that—I know it all—there's half-a-crown for you.

Lucy. La, sir—well, I never!

Top. No more did I, my dear—so run away.

Lucy. And do you really mean to say that you *knew* he was there?

Top. Knew *who* was there?

Lucy. Your friend, sir—Mr. Featherstone.

Top. Knew he was *where*?

Lucy. In Mrs. Top's bedroom, sir.

Top. Then you didn't see a woman—eh?

Lucy. A woman, sir; oh! Mr. Top, what *have* you been doing?

Top. Don't look at me in that way—I've been doing nothing.

Lucy. No, sir, it was Mr. Featherstone I saw—I saw him enter the room, and I heard him talking very loud, as if he was in a passion.

Top. And what right has any man to be in a passion in my wife's room? Why didn't you go in?

Lucy. I ran away, sir, to tell you.

Top. Then, why the devil *didn't* you tell me?

Lucy. I *have* told you, sir.

Top. Well, if you did—how should I recollect who told me? What did you keep me chattering here for, then? I'll go and throw Mrs. Top out of the window.

Lucy. You'd better go and throw Mr. Featherstone out, sir.

Top. Well, didn't I say I'd go and throw him out?

Lucy. You said Mrs. Top, sir.

Top. Well, I'll go and throw 'em both out, and myself after them. [*Going, R.*]

Lucy. That's the wrong way, sir,

Top. Then, why the deuce didn't you tell me so. Get out of the way. Oh, Mrs. Top!—Tom!—Operas!—Kate! closets! and the devil! (*going, stops L.*) Here, you cook, throw this key out of the window, will you. It has worn my pocket away for the last week; and I don't know *what* it belongs to. (*Gives one key.*) And now for—at the least—two or three most sanguinary murders! [*Exit, L.*]

Lucy. Well, if I ever *did*!—it's my opinion, things are in a very serious state. Save us—who's coming now?

Enter TOM FEATHERSTONE, running, R.

Tom. Have you seen Mr. Top, girl?

Lucy. He's gone to murder you,—and serve you very right.

Tom. And I'm about to do as much for him. Where is he?

Lucy. Oh, don't ask me—you wicked man.

Tom. What d'ye mean, you stupid carpet-brusher?

Lucy. You're a bad man—you've got it in your eye. You've got a *bad* eye, sir, any one may see that. Poor, dear Mr.

Top gave me half-a-crown, and you call me a stupid carpet-brusher.

Tom. (Aside.) What the devil did he give her half-a-crown for? *(Aloud.)* Well, my dear, here's half-a-sovereign for you, and now tell me why he gave you the halferown?

Lucy. I shall tell you nothing, but that he's going to do with you as he told me to do with this key—that is, fling you out of the window.

Tom. A key *(aside)* which he wants to get rid of. I'll have it—it may lead to something. *(Aloud.)* Let me look at that key, my dear, will you?

Lucy. No. I won't; and I shan't stay here another minute—and you'd better go and be thrown out of the window. Now don't come near me.

Tom. Nonsense, my dear. See! *(Snatches key.)* Thank you, there's the half-sovereign for you.

[Throws down money, and runs off, L.]

Lucy. The nasty long stick of white sealing-wax, but he got nothing out of me; can't be much harm in his having the key, or I shouldn't be told to throw it away. But as for the half-sovereign, I may as well pick it up.

[Picks up money, and exit, L.]

SCENE 3.—*Same as First.—Knocking at both closet-doors as the scene opens.*

Enter TOP, L.

Top. Aye, knock away, my fine girl. You've got leisure for a little practising now, if you can find room. *(Stops knocking.)* But *where's* Mrs. Top? she's not in her bedroom, nor he either. Of course not—where she is, he is. I forget whether I was going to throw Featherstone out of the window or myself. In one case, I only get rid of one annoyance, in the other, I get rid of 'em altogether. *(Kicking.)* That's right, kick away? Hark, some one's coming. Gad, I must stop her. *(Talking loudly.)* I say, sir, that I'm master in my own room, and that I insist—

[Knockin' ceases.]

Enter TOM, L.

Tom. So, sir. Three words with you—and I use other means of making myself understood. There is a lady, sir, in this house, for whom I entertain the profoundest regard.

Top. I know there is, sir; and what right have you to entertain a regard for that lady?

Tom. What, sir?

Top. I love that lady, sir.

Tom. And you dare confess this?

Top. Of course I do.

Tom. And to my face?

Top. Confound your impudence! dare you confess it to my face?

Tom. To everybody's face.

Top. And you mean to say, sir, seriously, that you have any claim to—

Tom. (Interrupting.) Any—every claim. She is mine, sir, indisputably mine—by every right and title on earth.

Top. (Aside.) I certainly must have been at somebody else's marriage instead of my own.

Tom. I chose her from the world, and I will keep her.

Top. Why the deuce didn't you choose her a fortnight ago?

Tom. You're playing with me, sir. She was mine a year ago.

Top. (Aside.) Oh, I can't be married!

Tom. You will allow, sir, this is pretty behaviour of your's for a married man!

Top. Why, damn it, sir! do you think, if I wasn't married, I should care a rap about it. Why don't you get a wife of your own, sir?

Tom. I intend to make that lady my wife, sir.

Top. You calculate on her shortly being at liberty to marry, then?

Tom. Very shortly, sir! But I waste time. Did you not, this morning, undertake to deliver a letter from me to her?

Top. If I did, I'll be—

Tom. (About to collar him.) Don't force me to forget myself, sir.

Top. I really wish you'd recollect yourself—have you the inconceivable impudence to assert that I promised to give a letter of your's to Mrs. Top?

Tom. Oh! bother Mrs. Top, I mean Miss Huntley. You have basely secreted her somewhere, sir. Release her at once, or dread a lover's anger.

Top. You have clandestinely confined Mrs. Top somewhere, sir. Give her back to me, or dread a husband's fury.

Tom. This ridiculous charge shall not save you, sir. Miss Huntley was seen to enter your room here.

Tom. This is all very well, sir. You were seen to enter Mrs. Top's room there, and now she's not to be found.

Tom. Your treatment of Miss Huntley, confirms me in demanding satisfaction.

Top. Agreed, sir. Mrs. Top or satisfaction I want, and Mrs. Top or satisfaction I'll have!

Tom. Very well. I have pistols in my room. I wish to heaven they were rifles instead of pistols. [*Exit, L.*]

Top. And I should prefer artillery of any size! Come, I think my memory's improving wonderfully, for I perfectly recollect that I'm going to fight a duel, although I can't say that I know perfectly what it's for. My wife's in it—and Tom's wife's in it—no, no—my wife's Tom's wife! No, that can't be it either. Ah! Tom says I've taken his mistress—that's it—then there's the opera company here—or some of 'em! (*Knocking at closets again.*) That's right, keep me in mind of you. But there'll be louder knocking presently.

Re-enter TOM, L., with pistols—knocking ceases.

Tom. What knocking's that?

Top. How should I know? (*Aside.*) I'll not tell him now!
(*Aloud.*) Are you ready, sir?

Tom. Would you like to examine the charge, sir? (*Offering pistols.*)

Top. (*Taking one.*) No, sir, it's no affair of mine—I am going to make you a present of it.

Tom. Take your place, sir.

Top. You've no choice?

Tom. I stand here, sir!

Top. And I here!

[*He goes up to the closet, L. H., in which Kate is confined.*

Tom. Now, sir; at the three, we fire! One!—(*Screams from the two closets.*) Hilloa!

Top. (*Aside.*) That confounded opera girl won't let me alone now!

Mrs. T. (*From closet.*) Mr. Top, Mr. Top!

Top. My wife's voice! Where have you hid her, sir?

Tom. You've hid her somewhere yourself, and can't recollect where!

Top. No, no, no. What shall I do? I knew I was in love with somebody's wife. And now I can't get her, and find it's with my own wife.

Mrs. T. (*Within.*) Top, Top, let me out, I'm being smothered.

Top. There, she says she's being smothered—where are you? Matilda—Ann—Jane—damn it, I forget her christian name. What is my wife's christian name?

Tom. By heaven—I'll fire, if you don't take your place.

Kate. (*Within.*) Tom! dear Tom! stop.

Tom. That's Kate's voice. The noise came from those closets!

Top. (*Aside.*) Yes, from one of 'em. But where's my poor wife kicking up a row. I must explain, if only for her sake. (*Aloud.*) Put down that pistol, and I'll explain all. You see, this morning, a confounded woman came to me from the Opera, to ask me to take benefit tickets, or something—I forget what—you came up stairs, I hid her in the closet behind, and there she is.

Tom. I can't believe this, sir; open the door.

Top. I can't, I've got no key.

Tom. A key. By heaven! the very key, I lay my life.

[*Produces key.*

Top. I don't know where you got it, but I knew I had't it.

Tom. There are two closets, which did you lock her in?

Top. (*Looking round.*) I'm hanged if I recollect now which it was—but we'll soon see. Knock, my dear! will you?
[*Knocking at both closets.*

Top. (*Who is standing by Mrs. Top's closet.*) This is the one.

Tom. (*Who is by Kate's, L.*) The knocking is here.

Top. Nonsense, it's here.

Tom. Damn it—knock again, will you?

[*Knocking at both closets again.*]

Top. Well, I say it's here.

Tom. And I'll swear it's here; so here goes. (*Tries key.*)

'Sdeath, this isn't the key now!

Top. Well, I haven't got it. (*Feeling in his pockets.*) Eh? Yes, I have, after all. I could have sworn now I gave it to somebody, or put it somewhere; but this is the closet. (*Tries key.*) I can't do it—I'm wrong now!

Tom. Come, you try mine then, and I'll try yours; if that won't do, I'll break 'em both open.

[*They change sides, and open the doors, Kate coming from the closet, L. H., Mr. Top opens, Mrs. Top from the one, R. H. F., Tom opens.*]

Top. (*After opening the door turns his back to it, and walks down.*) There's the lady, sir, and I wish you joy of her.

Tom. Mrs. Top!

Top. What?—I said you had locked her up somewhere.

Tom. 'Tis Kate, by all that's villainous! Now, sir, what have you to say to this rascally behaviour? I suppose you deny locking this lady up, now?

Top. And I shouldn't wonder if you denied locking my wife up?

Tom. I swear I haven't seen Mrs. Top since I left her with you.

Top. And I'll swear I haven't seen Kate at all. How came you by the key of the closet where my wife was locked up?

Tom. You gave it to the maid to throw away.

Top. You don't mean to tell me that I locked my wife up myself! I only locked one person up, and I had the key myself.

Tom. I'll not hear a syllable. Miss Huntley was locked up in that closet, and you had the key. The thing speaks for itself. (*Taking up pistol.*)

Kate. Dear Tom!

Mrs. T. Dearest Top, I can explain all.

Tom. I don't think the affair requires any explanation. I shall decline hearing it; but I think Miss Huntley might have treated me differently after the letter I sent her.

Kate. What letter? I have received none.

Tom. (*to Top.*) Is it possible, sir, that you never delivered the letter I gave you?

Top. 'Pon my life, I forgot the letter.

Kate (*to Tom.*) And in it you apologized for your behaviour?

Tom. I did; but I recal it now!

Kate. No, you don't. Come here. (*Takes Tom aside.*)

Top. (*Savagely to Mrs. Top.*) Don't look at me, ma'am, I beg.

Tom. Oh! if that's all, I'm satisfied. Your hand, Top.

Top. Much obliged to you. But will some one be good enough to satisfy me?

Kate. I can, dear sir, simply by telling you what I have told Tom.

Mrs. T. He'll only forget it.

Kate. I'll tell you at dinner.

Top. You're sure it was only a trick, then? Mrs. Top, embrace me! Let me see, there's something else, but I forget what it was. Can you oblige me by informing me? Oh, I know—it was to beg your kind indulgence for the

Tom.

MAN WITHOUT A HEAD!

Disposition of the Characters.

Top.

Tom.

Mrs. Top.

Kate.

CURTAIN FALLS.

Wooler (S.P.)

OLD PHIL'S BIRTHDAY.

A Serio-Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

J. F. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

*Sisterly Service, Plots for Petticoats, Language of Flowers, Allow
me to Apologize, Founded on Facts, A Twice-told Tale, &c.*

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OLD PHIL'S BIRTHDAY.

*First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre,
(under the Management of Mr. Scanborough, Sen.,)
on Monday, January 20th, 1862.*

Characters.

— MR. HARDRESS (<i>a Merchant</i>)	Mr. J. W. RAY.
LIONEL (<i>his Son</i>)	Mr. COLLIER.
PHIL STAPLETON (<i>Porter</i>)	Mr. J. ROGERS.
FRANK STAPLETON (<i>his Son</i>)	Mr. PARSELLE.
SERVANT	Mr. EDGE.
MARION HARDRESS	Miss PAGE.
BLANCHE HOWARD	Miss FANNY JOSEPH.

SCENE—Bristol.

PERIOD—1750.

Costumes—GEORGE II.*

* MARION HARDRESS and BLANCHE.—*1st dress*: Riding dress, hat and feathers. *2nd dress*: handsome brocade dresses of the time.

* See Lacy's Dramatic Costumes for Dresses of this period.

OLD PHIL'S BIRTHDAY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Courtyard of the House of Hardress & Co.; arched gateway at back, leading into the street; a lodge R. of arch, with door opening on to stage; house, L. D. 2. E.; office, R. D. 2 E.; and window, practicable.*

Enter MARION and BLANCHE from house, L. in riding habits with whips.

BLANCHE. Now positively, Marion, I won't ride out with you at all, if you will persist in teasing me about that tiresome brother of yours.

MARION. Then don't make such a shocking little prude of yourself; you know you are over head and ears in love with Lionel, so why can't you say so?

BLANCHE. I hope you are satisfied with your penetration.

MARION. Much more so than I am with your hypocrisy, I abominate hypocrisy! Now, look me in the face.

BLANCHE. There, then!

MARION. Now you are doing more than I required, I didn't ask you to colour up in that way.

BLANCHE. Oh, you torment!

MARION. Now, by all the hopes you have of one day signing yourself by another name than "Howard," answer me, *have* you fixed the day?

BLANCHE. Psha! I have fixed the day for forswearing your company, if you plague me in this way; can't you talk of something else?

MARION. Oh, you hypocrite! you know you'd hate me worse than poison, if I took you at your word. Do you think I didn't hear of your letting it all out, at the Hall, the other day, when you were playing at that stupid game, "I love my love"?

BLANCHE. False! false!

MARION. True! true! Sophy Osborne told me all about it, and how when you got to "I love my love with an H," you slipped out.

Gen. Rev. 24 p. 47, Spencer

BLANCHE. Because he's Handsome.

MARION. No, no! because he's Hardress, and you turned crimson, you know you did.

BLANCHE. It's all a wicked story, but I shall have my revenge some day, Miss Marion, I shall catch *you* falling in love some fine summer's night.

MARION. No, faith and troth you won't, cousin, when I fall in love, I'll fall in love by daylight, with the sun at its meridian, so that I may mark every blemish, as well as beauty, in the man I look on; I'll have no moonlight to soften *my* bargain, I promise you.

BLANCHE. Well, there are men enough in Bristol who can face the sunlight, and come well out of it too!

MARION. Let us hope so, else is Bristol very ill manned.

BLANCHE. I shall pray for the hour of your capture, then look to yourself! But I do not see that good-looking fellow of a clerk, who is usually——

MARION. What, Frank? he's——

BLANCHE. Frank! bless me, you're very ready with his name, and as I live, there's crimson on *your* cheek now! is it possible that?——

MARION. There, hold your silly tongue, for gracious sake! I know what you are going to say, but he is my father's *clerk*; that's answer enough for you, (*aside*) would it were so to *me*, (*aloud*) I called him Frank, because he is so old a friend, as well as the son of that dear old Phil, our porter, and the reason you do not see "the good-looking fellow," as you call him, is, that it is poor old Phil's birthday, which my father invariably keeps as a holiday, out of *respect* to the honestest, truest, best servant, ever master had.

BLANCHE. Good masters make good servants.

MARION. Not always; but Phil's heart and soul, are bound up in our house; he thinks, there is none other in the whole world to equal it; and I firmly believe, he is prouder of being porter to the house of Hardress, than he would be of being partner in any other.

BLANCHE. His *son*, *may* be a partner, possibly, to one member of the firm.

MARION. You saucy monkey; however, Frank Stapleton well merits the position he holds—by his own integrity and application, he has risen to the post of confidence he now occupies; and your banter about his eventual partnership in the firm, may be better grounded than you think for. Of course the old man is proud of his son's elevation, but I believe his greatest pride is in sitting down to dinner with my father, which he always does on his birthday.

BLANCHE. He's a dear old soul, I admit—hush! here he is.

Enter PHIL, from lodge, R, with pipe in his mouth, on seeing the ladies he hides it behind him.

PHIL. I beg your pardon, ladies, I didn't know as how you was a ornamenting my court yard.

MARION. Don't put your pipe away, Phil, it's a holiday you know, and your birthday into the bargain ; so pray smoke.

PHIL. Thank you, Miss, but not if I knows it ; if an old fellow can't behave himself proper and respectful on his birthday, of all the days in the year, when will he ? no, no, pipes and ladies don't go well together ; so there. (*puts pipe down in lodge, and comes down, C.*)

MARION. Well, Phil, I sincerely wish you many happy returns of the day.

BLANCHE. And I too, Phil, with all my heart.

PHIL. Thank you kindly, ladies ; as long as I belongs to the house of Hardress and Co., the returns of the day is sure to be happy ; 'cause happiness, and Hardress is spelt nearly alike, and both means the same thing ; but as for many more on 'em, why you see, I can't rightly look for 'em ; I have had a tidy innings, I have—and although I manage to keep my wicket all right now, there's an ugly player, a coming up, as is quite sure to bowl me out.

MARION. Why, Phil, I'm ashamed of you, indulging in such melancholy forebodings on a day like this.

PHIL. Why, miss, you see, melancholy ain't by no means in my line, I confess ; but if ever I do wander out o' the sunshine into the shade, it's on my birthday, though I don't know why ; but you see, my birthday has always been the time when all the important things as has befel me has come about.

MARION. Indeed !

PHIL. Yes, miss, and if it ain't a fatiguing you, I'll just give you one or two on 'em—but you're going a riding ?

MARION. The horses are not round yet, Phil, and if they were they could wait, *you* are the first consideration to-day, you know.

PHIL. Yes, miss, this is the day when I wouldn't change places with King George, though I suppose he *is* a sitting in the Tower of London, with the crown on his head. But, touching the important events as has happened on my birthday. first and foremost, miss, I was *born* on it—that were a very important event.

MARION. Very much so.

PHIL. Then, miss, I'd very near reached the great age of ten, when I fell in love with a interesting young female, rising nine ; and I remember very well, the first trouble I had was on my tenth birthday. I had threepence a week pocket money,

and on that very day she abandoned me, for a boy as had sixpence.

MARION. Oh, type of woman !

PHIL. Well, you may say so, miss, 'cause you may say anything ; but if anybody else said so, I should argue the p'int, for I never see no selfishness in a woman, ~~since~~ that ere time, but she were an out-and-out selfish young woman, she were. Then by-and-bye come my sixteenth birthday, that's what I call my *great* birthday, when I——

BLANCHE. Fell in love again ?

PHIL. No, miss, begging your pardon, I didn't ; I didn't make that venture again yet, but on that day I was leaning over the dock bridge a whistling and dropping stones in the water, when up comes Mr. Hardress, your grandfather, miss Marion, and asks me what I were a doing. "Nothing," says I, "and uncommon hard work I finds it." "You seem a strong lad," says he ; and I were strong then, miss, not the poor little worn-out fellow I am now. "Follow me my fine fellow," says he ; and I *weren't* a bad looking chap at sixteen, and I *did* follow him into this here very yard ; enough said ! I never left it any more. Wasn't I right in calling that my *great* birthday ?

MARION. My dear grandfather never had reason to repent his kindness, Phil.

PHIL. I humbly hope not, miss, and I trust no one o' the name o' Hardress ever will. Then I went on working for about twenty year as happy as—as—well, they say as happy as a lark ; but I don't know as how larks *is* happy ; I was when I met my—her as is asleep in the old churchyard yonder, and on my thirty-sixth birthday I married her, then mayhap, I were *too* happy, for she just lived long enough to give me my boy Frank, and then went back home again to heaven ; that next birthday were a bitter one, Miss Marion.

MARION. Drive away the memory of it, Phil, as soon as you can.

PHIL. Yes, miss, it won't bear thinking on too much, that *won't*. Well, ten years passed away, when on my birthday, miss, your grandfather comes to me, and says he, "Phil, instead of making you a present to-day, you must make *me* one—give me your boy Frank," says he, "I want to send him to school." And he *did* send him, miss, and made him the scholar you see he is ; and when he left school gave him a stool in the office—there was a event, miss ! my son in the office of Hardress and Co. !

MARION. He deserves his good fortune, Phil.

PHIL. If he didn't try to, miss, he'd deserve to be hanged, and I don't know as I should mind the hanging on him ; but he's a good lad, an honest and industrious lad, and ain't ashamed

of his old father, though he is only a porter—and why should he, eh? as long as the old man behaves as well at the gate as the young does in the counting house, there's no call to be ashamed on him.

MARION. You will never give any of us cause to be ashamed of you, Phil.

PHIL. If I did, miss, I should be the most ungrateful old ruffian going. I beg your pardon, ladies, I've been a boasting and a cracking myself up above a bit, but you see I'm hardly myself to-day, it's pride as does it; ain't I a-going to sit down to dinner with Hardress and Co., and eat Hardress and Co.'s meat, and drink Hardress and Co.'s wine; that's enough to turn a stronger head than old Phil's. Beg your pardon, ladies, but it's the pride as does it. (*crosses, L.*)

MARION. Be quite at ease, Phil, we are proud of *you*, and with reason.

BLANCHE. Oh! here's uncle.

Enter HARDRESS, from house, L.

— HARD. Come, girls, are you going to keep the horses in the street all day long?

MARION. We were so interested in our gossip with Phil, papa.

— MR. H. Oh! if Phil detained you, of course I have no more to say. I'll have no gainsaying my old friend to day.

PHIL. The young ladies, sir, were good enough to listen to the nonsense of an old man.

MARION. If it were not your birthday, Phil, I'd give you a good scolding for that, and that would be another important event on that memorable day. Come along, Blanche.

Exeunt with BLANCHE, C. to L.

— MR. H. (*offering his hand to PHIL*) Well, my good old friend, I again have the pleasure of wishing you all happiness on your birthday.

PHIL. (*hesitating*) I feels this here honor, sir, but it don't seem right somehow, for the like of me to shake hands with you.

— MR. H. Stuff, Phil; fie on the master, whose false pride forbids him to take the hand of an honest servant; you are my equal Phil, any day in the year, and on this day of all others, you are my familiar and honored friend.

PHIL. (*taking his hand*) I shall never forget this, sir, though I can't say all as I feels about it. (*aside*) I, the equal of Hardress and Co.! ha, ha! hanged if I don't offer him a pinch of snuff! I'm a impudent old dog; but I must do it. (*takes out snuff box*) Will it be too much of a liberty, sir, to offer you—

— MR. H. Thank you, Phil. (*takes a pinch*) That's excellent! do me the favour to try mine. (*takes out silver box, and offers it*)

PHIL. No, may I though? (*takes pinch—aside*) I've had my clumsy fingers in the snuff box of Hardress and Co.

— MR. H. That's a very handsome box of yours, Phil.

PHIL. This, sir? la! it's only a sixpenny one from Mother Brown's.

— MR. H. There's a character about it that pleases me vastly, I've taken quite a fancy to it, and if you would oblige me by changing boxes——

PHIL. What? ah, now you're a gammoning old Phil, sir, why your's is a silvery one!

— MR. H. Oblige me. Phil. (*takes his box and forces the silver one on PHIL*)

PHIL. I tell you what, sir, you'll be the ruin o' me, vanity'll spoil me, as sure as my name's Stapleton.

— MR. H. I'll risk that; now to other matters, this is the ninth anniversary of your son's entry into my office.

PHIL. If that long word mean's as Frank has been here nine years, you are right, sir, as you always are.

— MR. H. And I may tell you, for it is the mere truth, that every year he has raised himself in my esteem by his integrity, assiduity, and blameless conduct.

PHIL. Frank's done his duty, sir,—not a jot more.

— MR. H. More than his duty, Phil, and I have endeavoured to do mine by giving him the highest post of confidence in my house, where I regard him second only to my son, feeling perhaps, the more esteem for him as he replaced that wretched young man, Grantley, who abused my confidence so shamelessly.

PHIL. I'm sorry to see that 'ere young Grantley a lurking about our town still.

— MR. H. I was in hopes he had gone away, I should have taken sure means of ridding the country of him, but for his mother's sake; but we won't talk of him. Honesty, Phil, I regard as a man's highest virtue; where I find it I will reward it; where I miss it, if it were in my own son, the defaulter would be a stranger to me for ever after; your son, my good old friend, is honesty itself, and he shall find his account in it. He has asked me himself for a vacant appointment, but that does not quite hold with my design; what I propose doing for him I shall not tell you yet. You shall know more by-and-bye, suffice it to say that if I'm right, you will be prouder of your son a week hence than you ever thought to be.

PHIL. I don't know as I can be prouder on him than I am; I sometimes think I shall be punished for being *too* proud on him.

— MR. H. As I said before, Phil, you can *never* be too proud of an honest man. But I must leave you for a while, Phil, I have some accounts to arrange, and shall take this opportunity while the clerks are away, and I can have the office to myself.

Remember, we dine at four; be punctual and bring a good appetite with you. *Exit into office, R.*

PHIL. There's a man! there never was such a man, except, perhaps, his father. Now what's he going to do for Frank? raise his salary, maybe, and the rogue's rolling in riches already; why 'twas only the other day he wanted me to retire, and he'd allow me a hundred pound a year—retire! I retire! that's a good joke, hand over the keys of Hardress and Co. to somebody else. I should just like to see anybody else in that 'ere chair, in that 'ere lodge, that's all. *(takes out snuff box)* And old Phil's lived to take snuff out of a silvery box—Phil! if anybody calls me Phil to-day out of this here family, when I've got this box in my pocket, I'll knock him down! I am Mr. Stapleton—I don't know, but what I ought to insist on being Mr. Stapleton Esquire; perhaps if I was to go and finish that pipe, it would quiet me a bit, for my head's a turning round and round with vanity and happiness. This way, Phil, eh, od rot it! you're a pretty fellow! I beg your pardon; this way, Mr. Stapleton Esquire.

Takes up pipe, and exit grandly into lodge, R.

Enter FRANK from house, L. 1 E.

FRANK. I can bear the solitude of one room no longer—self-communion distracts me—for I have begun to lose self-respect. What an arrogant coxcomb—what an ungrateful wretch am I!—owing, as I do, all that I possess to the generosity of Mr. Hardress! to repay him by cherishing a presumptuous love for his daughter! I! his hired servant, the son of the humblest of his servants!—if *she* should guess it, what would be my fate? deserved scorn! reprobation and expulsion from a house, where I have so basely misused my privileges!—flight is my only resource!—this London office must be mine: nor is this all. I feel that I am committing a species of petty treason against the best of masters, by concealing from him the irregularities of his son; and yet, is it for me to expose the faults of one on whom he builds all his pride and hopes! What to do, I—Ah!

Enter LIONEL HARDRESS, hurriedly, C. from L.

LIONEL. Ah, Frank!—the very man, of all others, I hoped to find. Are we alone?

FRANK. As you see. What is the meaning of this disorder?

LIONEL. I believe, Frank, I am the vilest wretch on earth; to your kindness and friendship I commit myself, I will confess all to you; but before I do so, promise me that you will not desert me in my need.

FRANK. That promise I may safely make—speak freely and quickly, Lionel, this suspense is most painful.

LIONEL. I will, and yet you will despise me, when you have heard all. That villain Grantley has been the cause of——

FRANK. What! is it possible that you, the honoured son of an honoured father, can have descended to an intercourse with that dishonourable scoundrel?

LIONEL. Upbraid me as you will. I am young, Frank, and have committed many follies; but the worst was the suffering myself some months ago to be decoyed by an associate into a gambling house. It was there I met Grantley. Why need I recount by what devilish arts—by what threats of exposure he induced, compelled me to play with him and others. I won at first, and the infatuation of the infernal tables lured me on. At last I lost heavily, and last week I was in Grantley's debt £200.

FRANK. Well, this error is not irretrievable—pay him and avoid that iniquitous house and all like it, in future.

LIONEL. You do not know all, Frank; he pressed me for the money, and I had none to give him; I had lost largely to others, and having paid them, found myself without the means—he threatened me again with exposure. Oh, Frank, the bitter knowledge that it was in his power to degrade me in my father's eyes—to wring, if not break his heart—to ruin my prospects—to shut out for ever the hope of winning my cousin Blanche, nearly drove me mad! and of my madness this devil took advantage, persuading me to help myself for a day or two, till luck turned, “to what was my own;” he dared to show me a wax impression he had taken of the private lock.

FRANK. Great heaven! Lionel, this is some horrid dream you are telling me.

LIONEL. No, no; let me finish while I have the courage. His taunts and threats succeeded—a key was made—and yesterday I—closer, Frank—yesterday I abstracted two hundred pounds from my father's safe.

FRANK. Merciful powers! Miserable man!—you were mad!

LIONEL. Perhaps I was; but I paid him all, and I have not had a moment's peace since—remorse is gnawing at my heart! Oh, Frank, help me, or I shall go mad in earnest! (*crosses, L.*)

FRANK. How can I help you?

LIONEL. Thus:—I know you have saved money—lend me the amount I have taken, that I may replace it before my father discovers his loss. You will not refuse me, Frank, say?

FRANK. Refuse you, Lionel!—all I have is yours. You shall have the money on two conditions.

LIONEL. My dearest friend, name them.

FRANK. First, your solemn promise never to meet that wretch, Grantley, again.

LIONEL. I swear it!—I loathe and dread his very name.

FRANK. Next, that you deliver up to me that *false* key.

LIONEL. Too gladly. I have it here—and have not dared to part with it, day or night; and yet it feels like a bar of lead in my pocket; but I shall want it once more to —

FRANK. And you shall have it, when I give you the money; but, knowing of the existence of such a fatal instrument, I should not be easy were it not in my possession. I must insist on it, Lionel.

LIONEL. (*gives it*) There it is, Frank—and when can I have the money? I shall be in a terror till I have put it back: if my father *should* discover it.

FRANK. (*puts key in his pocket*) It would look strange for you to be about the business part of the house on this day, when the clerks are all absent; but be down early tomorrow before any one arrives, and you shall have it. Now, mind me, Lionel, I am by no means certain that I am acting rightly in being as it were your confederate in this matter; but heaven knows I do it for the best—to save you from disgrace—your father from despair; but let me entreat of you to change your course of life from this hour.

LIONEL. I do most solemnly promise it, Frank. You cannot regard my sin with more horror than I do now; believe me, my contrition is sincere, and never shall I forget the devoted—

FRANK. Hush! I hear my father moving, he is sure to come out to us.

LIONEL. I cannot meet him; I could not bear the look of his clear honest eye. Farewell, Frank, and remember.

Exit, into house, L.

FRANK. And I dread to break my resolve to him; but it must be—honor before all else!

Enter PHIL, from lodge, R.

PHIL. Wasn't that Mr. Lionel, as run away?

FRANK. Lionel has just left me, father.

PHIL. I thought so; what did he go away for? I wanted to offer him a pinch of snuff. (*producing box*) Never mind, you may have a pinch instead. Oh, I don't mind your taking a pinch out o' this ere box.

FRANK. Why, father, what a handsome box!

PHIL. Yes, boy, a contribution to the family plate from Hardress & Co.; and mind, it's to go right away down with the name of Stapleton; it'll be yourn when I'm done with it, and then it'll go to your son.

FRANK. My son, father, alas!

PHIL. No! no lasses shan't have it—your *son* I say! Why, confound you! you'll have a son some day, I suppose. You, don't mean to let the name of Stapleton die out, do you? eh!

Where'd you have been, I should like to know, if *I'd* had no son? Frank, my boy, no gammon; why I say, you don't look very jolly, what's the matter?

FRANK. Nothing's the matter, father.

PHIL. So I should think; nothing's got no right to be the matter to-day, it's the happiest day of my life; I've seen nothing but pleasant sights, heard nothing but pleasant words; first of all I see the two young ladies a looking like angels, if a angel could be prevailed upon to put on a hat and feathers, and then I see 'em from my lodge window a decantering across the meadows like mad. I think now, Frank, Miss Marion's the beautifullest young woman I ever seed.

FRANK. (*sighs*) Ah!

PHIL. (*remarking him*) What do you mean by "Ah!" If you mean, as how, you ever seed a beautifuller, you're the first Stapleton as was ever giving to fibbing.

FRANK. I didn't mean that, father, I didn't mean anything.

PHIL. Very well then—don't say "Ah!" when I'm a talking. I wonder now, what dook or markis she'll marry?

FRANK. (*sighs*) Ah!

PHIL. What! you're at it again; do you mean to say, she *won't* marry a dook or a markis? What's a dook to a Hardress and Co.! Pooh!—I don't know as I'd offer a dook a pinch out o' this 'ere box!

FRANK. I sincerely hope Miss Hardress will be happy, let her marry whom she will,

PHIL. Why, in course she will—what's to hinder her? But, I say, Frank, you speak as if you'd just been and had a tooth drawed—and I don't like it: there's everybody got to be jolly to-day--there ain't no funeral a-going on, as I'm aware on, is there?

FRANK. Father, I have something I wish to say to you.

PHIL. Very good then, speak out, hearty like; you've no call to be afear'd o' *me*—I ain't one o' those stony-hearted parents as snaps their sons' heads off when they speak to 'em. What is it, boy?

FRANK. I have already spoken to Mr. Hardress on the subject, and although he seems favourably inclined to my request, he will do nothing without your sanction.

PHIL. Ah! he was saying something about it just now—what is it? Come, state the case fair, and then I'll give my verdict.

FRANK. It is simply this, father: the manager of our house in London is about to retire, and I have solicited the appointment.

PHIL. Eh, what! London! I say, young fellow, have you been a doing honour to your old dad's birthday in a drop o' something afore breakfast?

FRANK. Indeed no, father; I speak very soberly.

PHIL. Then what are you talking about London for? Do you mean to say as how anybody in his sober senses would talk of leaving the house of Hardress & Co., for the devil's head-quarters, London?

FRANK. I feel, father, that I cannot conscientiously stay here. I *must* go—my peace—my reputation is at stake.

PHIL. Hold hard abit. Your reputation, Frank, is dearer to me than my own life; tell me how that's at stake, and if you convince me, I'll say, go—if I were never to set eyes on you again; but no secrets from your old father, Frank.

FRANK. I will tell you all, if you will give me your word never to divulge a syllable of my confession to a living soul!

PHIL. You wouldn't ask me to keep a wrong secret, Frank? You can't have a wrong secret for me to keep! so I give you my word—there, with this snuff box in my hand, and I wouldn't break a promise made over that.

FRANK. Briefly then, for it is torment to confess even to you—I have been base, dishonest, enough——

PHIL. Eh? gently there—just you recollect as how it's Frank Stapleton a-talking to old Phil.

FRANK. I must repeat it—base, dishonourable, mad enough to cherish a passion for Miss Hardress.

PHIL. What!

FRANK. Aye, father—stare at me with surprise and indignation, but it's the truth nevertheless—I love Marion Hardress to distraction.

PHIL. How dare you tell me you'd not been drinking, sir?—you're awful tipsy; just you go to bed, and wait there till I call you.

FRANK. I declare to you, sir, that it is so.

PHIL. What! you mean to tell me, that you, a he Stapleton, have been and gone and popped yo^r affections on a she Hardress?

FRANK. I do indeed.

PHIL. Then be so good as to fetch me a chair—for I shall tumble down, if I don't sit down. (FRANK *fetches chair from lodge*) Well, of all the events as ever happened on my birthday, this caps 'em; (*sits—but jumps up again*) why—you vicious—impudent—unnatural vagabond; I——

FRANK. Pray be calm, father.

PHIL. Calm! tell me to be calm again, will you, and I'll knock you down; you barefaced villain—you making up to your master's daughter! I don't rightly know whether this ain't a hanging matter.

FRANK. Be patient, father, and hear me. I know the enormity of my trespass as well as you do, and it is to save myself from

the consequences of it, to escape scorn and contumely, to remove myself from temptation, in short, to preserve my honor, and to apply myself to work in peace, away from this dangerous house, that I wish to go to London.

PHIL. Stop a bit, let me keep up with you—you want to say, in a short manner like, that you are doing a wrong thing, and your'e sorry for it, and want to get out of the way of temptation?

FRANK. That is exactly what I mean, father.

PHIL. A very good defence—recommended to mercy, according; there's my hand, Frank, I know'd you'd never do nothing wrong with your eyes open; then you ain't mentioned this here to the young lady?

FRANK. Father! but you don't think so ill of me as to suppose I had.

PHIL. Well, no, I don't. Now the question is, what's got to be done?

FRANK. I must go to London.

PHIL. True! I forgot all about London; the staggerer you gave me about Miss Marion put it all out of my head. Frank, it must be London—mind, I don't like it; I've been uncommon proud o' you, Frank, a sitting in that 'ere office; and besides I've always had my eye on you, and what you can do in London without me to look after you is a thing as won't bear reflecting on.

FRANK. I'll be very careful, father.

PHIL. And maybe you'll never see your old dad again.

FRANK. Don't think of that; in a year or two I shall have conquered my fatal passion, and can return to you and home without fear.

PHIL. Frank, always bear in mind these two p'int's—first, that you are a Stapleton, a name as was never yet disgraced as I ever heard on, a very poor family, but a very honest one; and second, that you belong to the house of Hardress & Co., keep them two p'int's in view, and you'll never have no call to be afeard o' falling into mischief or wicked ways. I'll speak to Mr. Hardress myself on this——(MR. HARDRESS *appears at window, R.*)

— Mr. H. (*calling*) Phil! Phil!

PHIL. Here I am, sir.

— Mr. H. Just step this way, Phil, will you?

PHIL. Directly, sir. Here's a opportunity; may Frank come along too, sir?

— Mr. H. No, Phil, I want to speak to you alone. (*closes window*)

PHIL. D'ye hear that, you rogue? a private consultation, only him and me. I'll use my influence with the firm for you, young man, and if anybody enquires for me say I'm particularly

engaged with Hardress & Co., and can't be disturbed on no account whatever.

Exit pompously into office, R.

FRANK. The die is cast then—hope is extinguished. I feel easier now that my fate is decided, and if that fatal money were but replaced, I should be comparatively at rest. What could Mr. Hardress want with my father? in his private room, too! heaven! if he has discovered—— No, no, I will not think that so terrible a calamity would be suffered to befall such a man!

Enter MARION, C. from L.

MARION. Oh, Phil, Phil, will you—oh, it's you, Mr. Frank!

FRANK. My father has been sent for by Mr. Hardress, miss Marion, but if you will favour me with your orders, I shall be too happy to be his deputy.

MARION. Oh, dear no! I forgot; no one must give Phil orders on this day, or his deputy either.

FRANK. It will be a pleasure to do anything you wish done, Miss Marion.

MARION. Thank you. It was only to ask papa to join me in a ride, my companion would leave me to call on some stupid people, so I just rode back for another.

FRANK. I have reason to believe, Miss Marion, that Mr. Hardress is busily engaged just now; still, if you desire it——

MARION. Oh! it's of no consequence, thank you, I can ride by myself or not at all;—but bless me! what a solemn face, Mr. Frank, is anything the matter?

FRANK. No, Miss Marion.

MARION. No, Miss Marion? but I say, yes, Miss Marion, and I insist on knowing what it is; this is your dear old father's birthday, sir, and there shall be no gloomy faces about the house, if I can help it—come, sir.

FRANK. Indeed, Miss Marion, it is nothing,

MARION. No equivocation, sir! you had better tell me at once. I'm an excellent temper when I have my own way; but woe betide man, woman or child who opposes me. So now you know whom you have to deal with, and I can't bear to be kept waiting, that is another thing.

FRANK. Simply then, Miss Marion, as I must bow to your despotism, the grave look which offends you is easily accounted for. I have learned to look upon this house for so many years as my home, I have received in it so much kindness, derived from it so much advantage, that the thought of leaving it——

MARION. Leaving it! What on earth do you mean by leaving it?

FRANK. Our London manager retires, Miss Marion, and have solicited your father to give me the post.

MARION. Then I shall solicit my father *not* to give it you—you going to London indeed! I never heard such extravagant nonsense in my life! What in the name of patience can have put such stuff in your head?

FRANK. I am sure, Miss Marion, you will not exert your influence against me; it will enable me to extend my views of business, and to gain a better knowledge of the world.

MARION. More likely to extend your views of *pleasure* and to gain a *worse* knowledge of the world; but go, sir, go if you insist, go to London and see if you will find better friends than those you are so anxious to abandon. (*aside*) If I have striven to misunderstand my heart, it speaks plainly enough now.

FRANK. Oh, Miss Marion, where can I hope to find friends so true and kind as those I shall leave here? be assured that wherever I may be, my gratitude to——

MARION. Gratitude! you adopt a strange method of testifying your gratitude, seizing the first opportunity that occurs to abandon us—my father I mean—together.

FRANK. I shall still be in his service, Miss Marion.

MARION. Besides which, it is most unnatural to leave your father at his age, when there is no occasion for it.

FRANK. I leave him in such hands, Miss Marion, as to be under no apprehension for *him*.

MARION. Come, be candid with me; you have some motive for this strang caprice; confide in me, and if it be in my *power* to assist you, believe in my *readiness* to do so. Will you not, Frank?

FRANK. (*aside*) Frank! can I hear aright?

MARION. Say, have you formed some attachment—some unfortunate—some unreturned affection, which makes the neighbourhood distasteful to you?

FRANK. (*aside*) Can she suspect!

MARION. Say, is it so, Frank? speak to me as to a *sister*. (*aside*) Oh! pride, pride!

FRANK. I pray you do not question me.

MARION. Have I not a right? we were playmates, friends in childhood, our childish secrets were ever told each other; your boyhood has passed beneath the same roof, under the same kind guidance as my girlhood. Oh, Frank! do not suffer the formal restraint which a heartless world imposes, to debar me from sharing the joys or sorrows of your manhood.

FRANK. For pity's sake press me no further, there is no secret, or none that you can share.

MARION. There *is* a secret then; but I am unworthy to know it. Oh, Frank! I never thought that it would come to this.

FRANK. No, no! you are worthy of all confidence, all honour, all——

MARION. Prove it then, by telling me your grief.

FRANK. Oh, Marion! if I may call you so, I implore you, urge me no further; I am too weak to resist you, for *my* sake for *your own*—(*aside*) Fool! I shall betray myself yet.

MARION. For *my* sake, Frank! (*aside*) Mercy! can it be that the madness I so ill conceal has seized him too! and I am urging him to a confession! (*in a constrained voice*) I feel, sir, that I have no right to press you further, keep your own secret, and forget that I sought to—

FRANK. You are not angry with me?

MARION. Oh, no, no; but, Frank, for my—for all our sakes forego this journey to London, and—

Enter BLANCHE, C. *from* L.

BLANCHE. Ahem!

MARION. (*starting—aside*) Blanche! provoking! (*aloud*) Oh, Blanche—are you back?

BLANCHE. Yes, to look for my runaway; but if I interrupt any business—

MARION. Pshaw! What business can you interrupt?

BLANCHE. I thought you might be taking advantage of “the sun’s *being at its meridian*.”

MARION. You stupid, spiteful thing!

BLANCHE. I’ll go and order the horses back.

MARION. Not for the world. I’m dying for a canter. I’ll race you, Blanche, for a new whip!

BLANCHE. Done. Mr. Stapleton will see us to our saddles.

FRANK. At your service, ladies!

BLANCHE. (*aside to* MARION) Cousin!—“how does my father’s clerk look in the sunlight?”

MARION. I’ll lay my whip over your shoulders, if—

BLANCHE. Ha, ha, ha!

Exeunt BLANCHE, MARION, and FRANK, C. *to* L.

Re-enter MR. HARDRESS and PHIL *from* house, R.

PHIL. (L.) Lawk-a-mercy! Now who’d have thought it—why, this here event knocks all my other birthdays nowhere—the private safe of Hardress & Co. robbed!

— MR. H. (R.) Hush, Phil—not so loud!

PHIL. I feel very queer, and faint like: I don’t think a little drop o’ brandy’d come amiss.

— MR. H. It is a most mysterious and unpleasant business Phil: and whom to suspect!—besides it’s a marvel to me how was managed; the key of that safe never leaves my possession.

PHIL. Excuse me, sir, but are you sure you ain’t made no mistake in your ’rithmetic?

— MR. H. No, Phil, I am too old a head; but don't say a word to any one just at present—the amount is nothing; but the fact—the fact—hush!

Re-enter FRANK, C. from L.

Oh, Frank! have you spoken to your father on the subject of the London berth you were so anxious about?

FRANK. (L.) I have, sir, and have received his sanction, (*aside*) And if what I have dared to think within the last few minutes have any foundation but my own mad conceit, I have more need to go than ever!

PHIL. Yes, sir, Frank's come over me on that point—and I'm not easy come over either!

— MR. H. Well I shall miss you, Frank, but it will serve your interests; so I have no more to say—you could start soon?

FRANK. Sir, the sooner the better—to-morrow. (*aside*) I dare not risk such another meeting with her!

— MR. H. We'll talk that over this evening, Frank. (*noise without*)

Re-enter BLANCHE, hurriedly, C. from L.

BLANCHE. Oh, uncle! Mr. Frank! Marion's horse has taken fright, and is rearing so! she'll be thrown—oh, do come!

FRANK. (*tearing off his coat*) Great heavens! (*throws down coat and rushes off, C. to L., followed by BLANCHE, MR. H., and PHIL to door*)

— MR. H. Let me pass!

PHIL. No, no, sir, Frank'll do it. How the creature plunges! well sat, Miss Marion, *he* can't throw her, sir—that's it, Frank, to his head, boy—both hands—steady, so ho! he's got his master—that's the style. All right, sir, the beast's quiet and the beauty's safe!

— MR. H. Thank heaven, it was no worse! (*they come down*)

PHIL. (*seeing coat on stage, L.*) See here now, the way these young 'uns throw their things about! his bettermost coat, too—a careless dog! (*stoops with difficulty and picks it up*) Ugh! my back! I can't stoop quite so slick as I used to—there, all over dust! (*as he rubs the dust off the key falls out*) What's that, now?

— MR. H. Let me, Phil, I can stoop easier than you. (*picks up key*) What do I see? by heaven! *a false key to my private safe!*

PHIL. (*simply*) Eh? that ain't possible, you see, 'cause it fell out of my boy Frank's pocket.

— MR. H. It is, old man—see, here is my key. (*takes out key*) Look; the very counterpart. (*PHIL is struck speechless, drops the coat and stares vacantly at MR. H.*) My poor old friend, I had rather have lost half my fortune than have seen this.

Re-enter MARION, C. from L., leaning on FRANK's arm, and BLANCHE—MR. H. walks up to them and takes MARION away to R.

PHIL. (*rushing wildly up to FRANK*) Frank, my boy, the key—in your pocket?

FRANK. (*C., seeing key in MR. H.'s hand*) Great heaven!

PHIL. Frank, tell 'em it isn't yours—tell 'em how you got it—tell your old father—Frank, my boy, my boy!

FRANK. (*aside*) I dare not speak or Lionel's lost! cruel mischance!

—MR. H. The silence is answer enough. Girls, go in.

MARION. What is it, papa?

—MR. H. The old story—trust met by treason. Mr. Stapleton, leave my house! (*crosses, L.*)

MARION screams—BLANCHE runs to her—PHIL clings to FRANK.

FRANK. Mr. Hardress, you are deceived, I—

—MR. H. I am, indeed—bitterly deceived.

PHIL. Yes, deceived—all of 'em—you are innocent. Frank, prove it, prove it to 'em—for your poor old dad's sake *why* don't you speak, Frank? (*stamps his feet hysterically*) Tell 'em you're not a thief!—my head is bursting. (*screams out*) Ha! and this is *my birthday*!

PHIL falls into FRANK's arms—MARION faints—*Tableau, and*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Mr. Hardress's Drawing Room, handsomely furnished in the fashion of the last century; door, C.; doors, L. 1 E. and L. 2 E.; door, R. 1 E.; large window, R. 2 E. and R. 3 E.; long merino curtains.*

LIONEL HARDRESS *discovered*.

LIONEL. No rest—no moment's rest—tormented by the memory of my guilt; and worse by the terrible knowledge that an innocent man is suffering for my evil-doing! his fair clear life clouded by the foul stain of my sin! Oh! why can I not confess all, set him free, and publish myself as I am! Why?—because I am as great a coward as villain. I who had courage to do this monstrous wrong, have not the courage to do a simple right! I shun every one, avoid every eye—I dare

hardly look my sister, my mistress, and least of all, my father in the face. Hark! footsteps! it is those poor girls!—if they only knew—(*sits at table, R., and leans his head on his hands*)

Enter MARION and BLANCHE, door, L. 2 E.

MARION. (C.) Oh, Blanche! Blanche! who would think two such mornings could follow each other—yesterday all was gaiety, gladness, joyful, anticipation—

BLANCHE. (L.) Save in *one* guilty bosom, Marion!

MARION. (*impatiently*) Yes, yes—we know that. To-day all is gloom, doubt and melancholy foreboding; but of one thing, I am as certain as that the sun burns in heaven, and that is—Frank Stapleton is *not* guilty of that laid to his charge.

BLANCHE. Do you absolve him, then?

MARION. (*defiantly*) Do *you* accuse him?

BLANCHE. No, dear; but still you must admit that circumstances—

MARION. Hang circumstances! when they would fight against my own sense, my own judgment, my own heart! Frank guilty!—I would as soon believe in the guilt of my brother Lionel!

LIONEL. (*starting up with a cry*) Ah!

(BLANCHE and MARION start, and turn round)

MARION. Don't do that, you foolish fellow, you quite frightened us.

BLANCHE. It was a judgment on you, miss, for coupling Lionel's name with guilt.

MARION. I would as soon couple his, your's, my own, with guilt, as Frank Stapleton's; one and all are monstrous, false, impossible. I am quite sure, Lionel, you will join me in his defence.

LIONEL. Gladly, for I believe him guiltless,

MARION. There's my own brother. What! a boy who has grown man beneath our father's roof, a stranger, who has become one of our father's household, a servant, whose integrity has raised him to our father's right hand, on whom unbounded love has been lavished, unbounded trust reposed, *he* abuse that love, betray that trust, and *rob* our father! If it be so, there is no trust in man--no honesty in woman; and I here boldly stake my woman's honesty upon that man's truth.

BLANCHE. Marion, you are excited.

MARION. Excited, no, I am calm—just—and self-reliant; but when all look sideways on the poor lad—when the cloud hangs over him, and those that should know him best, begin to fall from him, never shall it be said that Marion Hardress shrunk from upholding him—aye—if she does it singly—one against the world. Mind me, cousin, I will work, and watch, and wait.

until I find the culprit; I will drag him out into the sunlight, for my strength will out-measure his, and Frank shall stand by—*then* the world shall wonder how upright innocence, and grovelling guilt, could ever have been confounded, even in suspicion.

BLANCHE. Pray be calm, Marion—why, Lionel, how pale you are.

LIONEL. Am I? yes, I am worried, anxious, distressed—this painful affair is—

MARION. Can you wonder Lionel is so ill and pale, when his earliest friend and playfellow is lying under this painful imputation?

BLANCHE. Here comes my uncle.

Enter MR. HARDRESS, D. L. 1 E., nervous and excited.

LIONEL. (*aside*) If I do not struggle with myself, my agitation will betray me.

MARION. Papa, have you heard—discovered anything?

—MR. H. Nothing, Marion; no persuasion would induce poor Phil to remain at the lodge. I have just sent for him and shall make one more attempt, for I could not bear to see the poor old man going away so stricken and broken down—he who always held his head so upright.

MARION. Poor dear Phil, all his honest pride thus cruelly humbled.

—MR. H. And the ties that bound me to that young man have so wound themselves about my heart, that it almost breaks that heart to cast him off—if he be guilty.

MARION. Guilty! *you* believe it?

—MR. H. Do not ask me, Marion; but if guilty, a first false step may be retrieved, and so, although against my better judgment, I sent for Frank.

MARION. There awoke my father's judgment! there spoke my father's heart!

—MR. H. I sent for him, to entreat him, if he knew any clue to this mysterious crime, to unfold it, or if he were himself the guilty—

BLANCHE. (*pulling MARION back*) Hush, Marion, pray don't!

—MR. H. If he were himself the guilty party to confess, and I would forgive it.

MARION. It is a cruel insult to him.

—MR. H. You need not distress yourself, Marion, he refused to come.

MARION. Do you wonder at it? come back to be received as a pardoned thief? never! Be just, sir, take him back without a word, without a question, and trust to time to unravel the web of this wicked mystery.

— MR. H. Can I do so in common justice? Oh, Marion, how gladly would I; but that key, how came that key in his pocket?

MARION. What do I know? What do I care? Say it was placed there, say it was conjured there if you will, say anything possible or impossible but that *he* put it there; or if so, that it was *his*, or that he used it.

— MR. H. He might have come to me when I sent for him.

MARION. He shall come to you if you will promise only to persuade him into divulging what he knows of the matter.

— MR. H. My heart yearns towards him. I promise.

MARION. Enough! I will write to him myself, I do not think he will refuse to come if I ask him.

Enter SERVANT, C. from L.

SERVANT. Old Phil, sir, to wait on you.

— MR. H. Send him in. (*crosses and sits at table, R.*)

Exit SERVANT, C. to L.

MARION. You, Lionel, shall take my letter to Frank.

LIONEL. I, Marion!

MARION. I, Marion! do you object?

LIONEL. No, but—

MARION. Come at once then, no letter goes from me to him by the hand of a servant. Come Blanche.

Exeunt MARION, BLANCHE, and LIONEL, door L. 2 E. MR. HARDRESS buried in thought

Enter PHIL, C. from L., dejected and bowed down, his appearance strongly contrasting with his previous erect and confident bearing, he stands meekly before MR. HARDRESS, who rises and advances to him.

— MR. H. Well, Phil, my poor old friend! (*offers his hand*)

PHIL. No, no, sir! I humbly thank you. I took your hand yesterday, it was an honour, I didn't deserve it; but I could take it—I mustn't take it to day.

— MR. H. Why not, Phil? at least, *you* are the same to-day.

PHIL. Yes, sir, in course I am; but I didn't know it then—I didn't know the wickedness as was in me, or I daren't have took your hand then.

— MR. H. Wickedness in *you*, Phil! come, come.

PHIL. In course, sir, it must be there, though we didn't know it, it must be in the blood, sir, cause he's my son, my own flesh and blood; therefore there must be wickedness in the breed, although it ain't broken out till now.

— MR. H. This is refining too much, Phil.

PHIL. Aye, there'll want a good deal more fining yet, sir, afore any one o' the name o' Stapleton can look a honest man in the face again. I don't call to mind now, Mr. Hardress, as

ever I did anybody any wrong or harm, or wished 'em any either, and yet I couldn't look a man straight forrer'd—right in the eye, you know, whatever you'd give me.

— MR. H. Pooh, nonsense, I know better! now just try with me.

PHIL. Perhaps you'll excuse me, sir? I should only break down.

— MR. H. I know better; try now, I insist upon it.

PHIL. Well, sir, if you insist I'll do my best, as in duty bound; but (*putting his hand to his breast*) there's a something here as tells me I didn't ought to; but I'll—there—there. (*raising his eyes timidly to MR. H., but suddenly withdrawing them—bitterly*) No, no, I can't do it, but I always could, I always could till now. (*buries his face in his hands*)

— MR. H. Come, come, Phil, this won't do; perhaps after all Frank—

PHIL. No, sir, please don't; let me ask as a favour as how you won't mention his name—I can't abear it, it was once always in my mouth, now it will never be there again.

— MR. H. Well, let us hope for the best, all may not be so bad as we fear.

PHIL. I hope you don't mean to say, sir, as how there's any doubt o' that boy's guilt?

— MR. H. Strangely accusing circumstances have happened, Phil, which have led to the suspicion of perfectly innocent people.

PHIL. No, no, sir; it's only your goodness—don't try to persuade me; wasn't the key found in his pocket? I wonder if a key had been found in my pocket, I should have been mistaken for a innocent?

— MR. H. That might be explained, Phil.

PHIL. Then why weren't it explained—why didn't he explain it? that's what I want to know; keys don't go a walking about and hiding themselves in people's pockets; and then, what did he want to go a dancing up to London for in such a hurry? the very idea of a young fellow wanting to go to that rampaging town, proves the wickedness as is in him—he's a bad 'un—he gave me another reason for wanting to go. Let him go to London now, he's pretty nigh broke my heart.

— MR. H. Now, my old friend, be calm.

PHIL. But he ain't quite broken old Phil's spirit though. I tell you what I mean to try and do, Mr. Hardress; I mean to go and work—oh I am strong enough, I mean to go and work, and heaven helping me, and giving me health, mean to pay every farden o' that there wretched two hundred pounds back.

— MR. H. What! you?

PHIL. I do, if I can live long enough—every farden, and then, maybe I can look right up once more.

— MR. H. Nonsense, Phil; do you think I care about the paltry money? why I'd have given him twice the sum if he had asked for it.

PHIL. I know it, I know it; the ungrateful villain; and then to rob the hand that has fed and sheltered his old father for six and forty years! Oh! it's a cruel bad thing to think on! (*passionately*) And I can't think on it! or I shall curse him here where I stand.

— MR. H. Phil, Phil! I cannot permit this! Be advised by me—return to your old post in the lodge.

PHIL. (*mournfully*) No, sir, I can't. No fellow o' the name o' Stapleton must eat the bread of Hardress and Co. again.

— MR. H. Well, well, you'll think better of it, I know; but now, as you have told me your intention, I feel bound to tell you what mine was, you will then guess what pain this occurrence must cause me. I have long noticed what I think no one else suspected, hardly perhaps the parties themselves, namely that Fr—— that unhappy young man, loved my daughter.

PHIL. Hush, sir, pray; still I almost fear as how he's capable of anything.

— MR. H. Now, Phil, so far from being displeased at this, I took pleasure in fancying that Marion returned his love.

PHIL. No no! it ain't possible, she couldn't do it!

— MR. H. Indeed, I have long since intended retiring from business and had taken steps to transfer the business to Lionel, with a proviso that in three years your son should be taken in as a partner, and my daughter's husband!

PHIL. What? my wretched son a partner in Hardress & Co.'s house—the husband of Hardress & Co.'s daughter! no, no! such things couldn't be, nobow.

— MR. H. Indeed they could, Phil, and I have not told you this to increase your grief, but to show you what reward I thought due to so much integrity and good conduct.

PHIL. Oh! thank heaven, sir, you have escaped that blow! but here's punishment for him; he must know o' this somehow, and your goodness and his own evil must crush him down as it well nigh does me. But, sir, there's one thing on my mind as I shan't be easy till I gets off on it.

— MR. H. Why, what's that, Phil?

PHIL. Well, sir, you give me a snuff-box yesterday—a silvery one—and I thought I should look on that, and be proud on it, till I took to my bed for the last time. I should be happier in my mind, sir, if you'd just take that snuff-box back.

— MR. H. Nonsense, Phil, keep it in token of my unabated esteem.

PHIL. No, sir, it can't be; I could never take a pinch o' snuff out o' that box again—it'd go the wrong way, and choke me!

— MR. H. Why, Phil, this is—

Re-enter MARION, door, L. 1 E.

MARION. Papa—Mr. Frank has arrived!

PHIL. Eh!—keep him away! hide me! Mr. Hardress, Miss Marion!—I won't see him! How dare he set foot in this house!

MARION. Phil, I'm shocked at you—papa sent for him.

— MR. H. Where is he, Marion?

MARION. In your private room, papa.

PHIL. Ah! who put him there?—drag him out: he'll steal something else!

MARION. Oh, Phil! Phil!—for shame!

— MR. H. (*crossing to L.*) I'll go to him; and I'll leave Phil with you, Marion.

MARION. Do so, papa! and I will try to bring him to a better frame of mind.

— MR. H. Mind, Phil, you do not leave the house till I have seen you again.

Exit, D. L. 1 E.

MARION. (*places chair, C.*) I cannot think, Phil, that you really believe this shocking charge against your son.

PHIL. (*seated*) Miss Marion, I would have these two hands chopped off, to prove him innocent!

MARION. Oh, Phil! there is some wicked conspiracy of which he is the victim—be very sure of that; think of what he always *has* been, and *can* you believe him to be *now* that which some would have him to be? Trust me, he is not.

PHIL. (*to himself*) How unaccountable pleasant and soothing a woman's voice is, when one's in trouble.

MARION. (*brings footstool and sits R. of PHIL*) You always believed what I said, Phil, even when I was a little child; pray, pray, for your own peace sake, believe me now! You do not speak, Phil, what are you thinking about?

PHIL. I was a thinking, Miss Marion, as how you was as near an angel as makes very little difference.

MARION. Oh, Phil, do not think of me *at all*! let us think, both of us, how to fathom this mystery, and save Frank.

PHIL. Ah, please, not that name! Miss Marion, I asked your father not to use it, and he were good enough not to, and it seems to come more cutting like from your lips.

MARION. What! not call your son by his name?

PHIL. Name, miss? he has no name now. Oh, Miss Marion! do you remember only yesterday, I was a telling you in a sort of a jokersome manner—ah! I shall never be jokersome no more—as how my birthday was always a eventful day to me; I little thought what a bitter eventful one that'd be.

MARION. Come, come, do not give way, Phil.

PHIL. Give way, miss? Oh! why hadn't I ha' died yesterday morning? I should ha' died a happy old man then.

MARION. Nonsense, Phil, you shall *live* a happy old man for years to come yet.

PHIL. No, no, never no more; my only son, my pride and comfort once, has covered my gray hairs with shame and sorrow. Oh, Miss Marion! it looks so childish to see a old man a crying afore a young girl. (*hides his eyes*)

MARION. I know this is a heavy blow to you, Phil, and believe me, it is almost as heavy a one to me. Phil, I have loved you from my childhood upwards, have I not?

PHIL. Yes, miss, you was always very good to poor old Phil.

MARION. Then now hear if my distress should not equal yours; for I will breathe to you a secret I have hardly dared to breathe even to myself. I—*love your son!*

PHIL. (*alarmed*) No, no, miss! don't say that—don't now.

MARION. I do, Phil! I love him dearly, dearer now than ever; mine is no love that shifts with the sunshine? I loved him, though he knew it not, when all men honoured him. I love him now! and care not if he know it, when all men avoid him.

PHIL. Oh, Miss Marion! this is a bitter hearing; but my secret for yours—that wretched boy owned to me that he loved *you!*

MARION. I thought it—feared it first—hoped it next.

PHIL. And he give me that, as a reason for going to London, to avoid the sin of loving his master's daughter; but we know another reason for that now.

MARION. Hush, Phil! do him not that wrong; the reason he gave you was a true one, and, like his noble generous nature, doubling his worth in my eyes—double—stamping his unstained honour. Oh, Phil! think of him as I think.

PHIL. I can't do it, miss, whichever way I look; I seem to see, there, written in great red letters, the word "*thief*."

FRANK *appears at door, L. 1 E., he is seen by MARION; but not by PHIL.*

MARION. (*placing her hand over PHIL's mouth*) No, no, Phil! for the love of—Ah! see, there! Phil! oh, Phil, speak to him!

PHIL. Speak to who? what? where? (*turns and sees FRANK*) (*utters a cry*) Ah! no, no; stand aside! stand aside, and let me pass!

Throws up his arms and rushes past FRANK, door C., who moves from doorway. MARION buries her face in her hands

MARION. (R.) Oh, Frank! Frank! is not this terrible!

FRANK. (L.) Poor old man! his grief and anger are but natural; but, Miss Marion, I hardly dare to look you in the face.

MARION. Frank Stapleton, if you could not look me in the face, I should believe of you as others believe. Look at me at once. (FRANK *looks at her steadily*) I knew it, Frank! you *can* look me in the face.

FRANK. And yet, whilst under this terrible suspicion——

MARION. You are under no suspicion from me, Frank.

FRANK. Ah, Miss Marion, you are good and generous as ever.

MARION. Then I charge you, Frank, be the same; look at the misery you cause *your* father; you know the distress you cause *mine*; and can you not see the pain you cause *me*? be generous then to *all*, and reveal all you know of this wretched mystery. You are silent, is it thus you repay my generosity?

FRANK. Why, do you suppose, Miss Marion, that I am master of this mystery?

MARION. That fatal key was in *your* pocket: who placed it there?

FRANK. (*after a pause*) I—myself!

MARION. Frank!—well, yes, it might be so—but why?—whence came it—how did it fall into your hands? I beseech you to tell me all truly; do not deny me, Frank, dear Frank!

FRANK. (*aside*) Oh! this heavy trial!

MARION. Frank, you do not answer me; cruel—barbarous—ungrateful——

FRANK. (*aside*) If I do not tear myself away, all is over! I cannot bear this! (*aloud*) Marion! all believe me guilty. I will not say I do not feel it keenly—bitterly; but I can bear it—so that you alone, of all the world, believe me innocent!

MARION. Oh, Frank! what *am* I to believe: why bear the burden of another's guilt—there is some fearful secret.

FRANK. There *is* a secret!

MARION. Frank! once more I implore you; let me know it!

FRANK. It is not mine!

MARION. You will not speak?

FRANK. I cannot!

MARION. You *can*—you *will* not!

FRANK. (*after a pause*) I *will* not!

MARION. (*after a severe struggle*) I have but one last resource—it is a terrible one for me, but all is at stake; it is no hour for false scruples. Frank, you drag from me an avowal, which costs what you can never know, to utter—do not look at me, nor speak. Frank! I love you!

FRANK. (*with a cry*) Ha!—(*aside*) But this was wanted—now fate has done its worst!

MARION. Thus have I set at nought the maidenly reserve, which is woman's strength, and left myself defenceless. I have

surrendered the pure prerogative of my sex ; and do you now question my right to *exact* your obedience ?

FRANK. (*aside*) Oh ! the agony of this—human nature is almost too weak ! and yet to speak ! to crush her and her's beneath a weight of infamy, that—no ; if my heart burst, I will not !

MARION. You are silent even now—then hear me : I have ceased to sue or to persuade. I have forgotten myself too far already. I may not know this secret—be it so—but at least I may *command* you to relieve that poor old man from the grief that overwhelms him—clear yourself to *him* ; let me hear from his lips that you are guiltless, and I will be content never to see you again ! I give you to that dial's hand touches the hour it approaches, to decide. (*retires up*)

FRANK. (*coming forward*) This was my own thought, all but my own intent. To my father the honour of the house of Hardress is dear as to myself, I feel that he would join me in the keeping of this fatal secret ; I know him too well to doubt that, so that he is convinced of my integrity, his consciousness of that, and of our having discharged our duty will teach him to endure the scorn of the world. (*clock strikes three*)

MARION. Well, Mr. Stapleton ?

FRANK. Miss Hardress, I consent.

MARION. You do ? you will tell him *all* ?

FRANK. Without reserve !

MARION. Enough ! We may never meet again, Frank, but keep your word, and Marion Hardress is your friend for ever. Hark ! surely that is his footstep !

FRANK. I must have a few moments to collect my thoughts, this room——

MARION. And I will to the garden ; when you leave him come to me in the lime walk for the last time. *Exit door L. 2 E.*

FRANK. Yes, yes ; sure never wretch bore a weight of misery like unto this ! *Exit into room, R.*

Re-enter PHIL, C., with letter, which he looks at on all sides.

PHIL. Well, this is a most extraordinary thing—I ha' been in that 'ere court-yard a matter o' six and forty year, and nobody never wrote me a letter before, and now when I steps out to cool my poor old head—which seemed like if it were full of hot coals—comes a chap with this 'ere letter for Phil Stapleton. Well, our story's all over the town, and I spose some one's been writing to console me like—but let us see. (*opening it*) Dear me ! how my hand shakes ! The sight of that wretched boy give me such a turn—now for it—(*reads*) “Phil Stapleton,—You're an honest man—I never was—shouldn't be now, if I wasn't on my death-bed—a sword-thrust from a friend has de-

frauded the hangman. Besides, I can have my revenge on the man I hate, and the money's of no use to me now. Your son is *innocent*. I send you the two hundred pounds stolen the day before yesterday from your house—in the same notes I received. The money was stolen by Lionel Hard——” (PHIL *looks around in terror, and hides the letter beneath his coat—whispering*) Am I awake! (*rubbing his eyes*) or am I fast asleep and dreaming a horrible dream! No—here is the letter, and here's the notes! let me read again—but so low that the walls can't hear me. (*reads in a subdued voice*) “The money was stolen by Lionel Hardress. This from a dying man.—Stephen Grantley.” (*after a pause*) Oh; my poor master! my poor master! He pitied me in my sorrow—and now—now—What's to be done! (*throwing up his head*) But my boy is innocent!—my brave boy!—and he has borne the blame to save his master's son! Good boy; he was right. The honour of the house of Hardress must be kept straight; but who's to tell the master of this? Who is to accuse his son to him? No one knows on it but me. Oh! here's a position for a ignorant old man—and must my boy be ruined! If I could but think—(*pauses*) Ah! an idea in old Phil's head; this must be Providence—there never was one there before—but it's a bitter hard thing to do—well, ain't other folks done hard things afore, and won't they have to do 'em again! Let's see how it 'll stand—the credit of Hardress and Co. saved, that's one great thing; my boy put square before the world, that's another great thing. (*softly*) This horrid secret kept from the master, that's another great thing—and only one worthless old man to be sacrificed—which is nothing at all—nothing at all to speak on; it's hard though—poor old Phil—honest old—but there, there—I've made my mind up. (*puts letter and notes carefully away*) I won't tell Frank though, or he'll be going agin it; I'll do it all my own way—let old Phil alone—ah! he's a cunning old dog, he is——

Re-enter FRANK, door B.—he remains at door.

FRANK. Father!

PHIL. (*starting*) Ah! you scoundrel—come here, sir, what do you stand gaping there for? Come here, sir! (*shakes his fist at him*)

FRANK. (R.—*aside*) Gracious powers; his brain is turned!

PHIL. (L.) What do you mean by staring in that way—ain't you a going to shake hands with your old dad—there, both on 'em, shake his arms off, and then punch his stupid old head!

FRANK. Why, father, what ails you?

PHIL. That I should ever think ~~you~~ guilty—forgive me, my boy—forgive me! (*throws himself into his arms*)

FRANK. (*aside*) What do I hear? (*aloud*) What, father, you are convinced——

PHIL. I know you're innocent—I——

FRANK. What have you discovered then?

PHIL. (*recollecting himself*) Discovered!—who said I'd discovered anything? I ain't discovered nothing. I know you're innocent, and you're my Frank again, and that's enough for me and you too.

FRANK. (*aside*) He must have found out something. (*aloud*) You need not be told, father, how I rejoice to hear you acquit me of this charge, but I conjure you tell me——

PHIL. Don't you ask me questions—'cause you won't get nothing out o' me.

FRANK. But one word, father—do you know the person who stole this money?

PHIL. My acquaintance among persons who are likely to steal money is limited, Frank; it's quite enough for you, that I know, who *didn't* steal it.

FRANK. But, father——

PHIL. Now, I ain't a going to be baited and badgered in this here manner—you've got no call to interfere in the matter—you just leave it all to me—I'll put everything to rights, and nobody hurt neicher.

FRANK. (*aside*) What can he mean?

PHIL. But, Frank, business may take me away from here, for some while. (*his voice falters*) You'll sometimes think of your poor old dad, if he's gone a very long time, won't you?

FRANK. Father, what in heaven's name do you mean?

PHIL. I mean nothing, but what's straightforward! Just you keep your tongue quite quiet, and don't you go to leave this house afore you see me again. I'm now a going to find Hardress.

FRANK. Not to speak of this affair, father?

PHIL. Never you mind what I'm going to speak about—I tell you again, nobody's going to be hurt, and everything's going to be put to rights—there, now shake hands again, Frank; bless you my boy, bless you always—not a word more. (*aside*) Now I think when I get out o' sight, I may venter to take a pinch out o' my silvery box.

He is going out door, L. 1 E.—LIONEL meets him—PHIL starts, but recovers himself—makes him a bow, and Exit door L. 1 E., keeping his eyes fixed on him.

LIONEL. Frank, I was looking for you—the old man quite startled me.

FRANK. (*aside*) He has startled me, too; I am in a perfect maze? What is it now, Lionel?

LIONEL. I have just heard that Grantley is dead—stabbed in some tavern brawl.

FRANK. An ill end, to an evil life.

LIONEL. But how came your father to be here with you, Frank—I thought he had vowed never to see you again?

FRANK. Lionel, you must keep up your courage, I do not think there is any cause for alarm, but my father evidently knows more of this matter than we thought for.

LIONEL. (*alarmed*) What?

FRANK. At least, he knows that I am not the guilty party; I could not ascertain if he knows who is.

LIONEL. But, Frank, if he does!

FRANK. You need be under no apprehension.

LIONEL. If he should expose me; Oh, Frank! had not I better confess at once? my father might forgive me then, but if he learnt it from another——

FRANK. No, no, I could swear that your secret, if in my father's hands, is as safe as in my own, and that he would no more dream of divulging it than I myself would; and after all I have suffered for you, and yet must suffer, I have a right to insist on your keeping silence.

LIONEL. Oh, Frank! you have indeed done for me what no man ever yet did for another, more than you should do, more than I can ever repay, and it cuts me to the heart that you should do it, yet——

FRANK. Enough, Lionel, say no more—I have chosen my path—I do not upbraid you, I only pray you to watch well the future.

LIONEL. Aye, Frank! and I will watch your future too.

FRANK. My future, Lionel, will wear out under another sun than that which shines on England.

LIONEL. You will leave me?

FRANK. I and my father shall bid farewell to old England, before the moon changes.

LIONEL. No, no, Frank! I cannot bear that you should be an exile for my sake.

FRANK. Have you a right to control my future?

LIONEL. No, no, Frank! oh, pity me! I am a miserable wretch—but, Frank, where is your father?

FRANK. He has gone to (*aside*) no, why excite his fears. (*aloud*) I hardly know where; I will go and keep an eye on him, or——

Enter BLANCHE, C. *from* L.

BLANCHE. Oh, Lionel, at last I find you. (*sees* FRANK) Oh! I was not aware you were here, Mr. Stapleton.

FRANK. I am gone, Miss Howard, this moment.

Exit door, L. 1 E.

BLANCHE. Dear me, Lionel, it looks very strange for you to be closeted here with that man.

LIONEL. He was my dearest friend, Blanche, and his position—

BLANCHE. Well, never mind his position; now just attend to mine. I am moped to death in this great silent gloomy house; Marion has got a fit of the sulks or something worse, if she speaks once, she sighs twice, and I want to be amused, so I'll just trouble you to come and amuse me.

LIONEL. Yes certainly, cousin Blanche, only—

BLANCHE. Well, you do look in a pretty state to amuse anybody certainly, why you're as bad as the rest, one would think from this fuss, it was the first time a clerk had robbed his master. I'm very sorry for it, he was a handsome civil fellow; but I really can't be sent melancholy because of his transgressions. Come and take me for a ride, or read me the new play, or give me a swing in the garden, or any mortal thing, only do something.

LIONEL. (*aside*) This girl's voice splits my head apart! (*aloud*) You must be aware, Blanche, that when this gloom overhangs the house—

BLANCHE. That the sooner we are out of it the better; so for goodness' sake get your hat and come along, why one would think to look at you, Lionel, with your pale face that you had been doing some shocking thing yourself.

LIONEL. (*savagely*) Be quiet, Blanche, joking on such a subject is—

BLANCHE. Well, upon my word, that's a pretty tone of voice to speak to one in; very well, sir, please yourself of course; the time may come when you will want to get some amusement out of *me*, it will be my turn then. Ha! here comes my uncle!

LIONEL. (*starting*) Eh! where?

BLANCHE. Dear me! don't jump in that way. Along the lobby and old Phil with him.

LIONEL. (*quickly*) Come along, Blanche, we'll go for a ride, come! quick!

BLANCHE. Well, don't pull one's arm off, bless the man!

(LIONEL hurries her off, R.)

Enter MR. HARDRESS and PHIL, door L. 1 E.

— MR. H. Why, Phil, this a strange whim of yours, old friend, you shall have your own way; I have given orders for the gates to be closed so that no one can leave the house.

PHIL. (*aside*) This is a job as is almost too much for me; I don't quite know as I'm equal to it.

— MR. H. I wish you would be a little more explicit, Phil; however, of one thing you are convinced—my unalloyed delight at your discovery of Frank's innocence

PHIL. Yes; yes, sir, he's Frank again now—innocent as a baby!

—MR. H. I could never bring myself *really* to think otherwise. I should almost as soon have suspected my own son!

PHIL. (*aside*) Ugh!—that was like a dig with a knife!

—MR. H. I can feel the relief it must be to your honest old heart, too; only one son, and that one suspected—it must have been a cruel blow. I can judge of your feelings by what my own would have been. Well, Phil, I'm getting impatient! shall I ring, and summon the—(*going to bell*)

PHIL. (*stopping him*) No, no, no! not just directly, sir, I ain't quite ready yet. (*aside*) I'm a cowardly old fool after all; but I must drive it off a bit longer. (*aloud*) I say, sir, six and forty years—a pretty long time to be in service, ain't it?

—MR. H. Indeed it is, Phil; but you remember it is your own fault—I wished you to retire years ago!

PHIL. Retire, sir!—no, no! my hope always was that I might die a sitting in that 'ere lodge, in the very act o'taking in a parcel directed to Hardress & Co.; but, I mean a servant as has been six-and-forty year in a place and never had a angry word from his master, may be reckoned a average tidy sort of a servant, eh, sir?

—MR. H. A king of servants, Phil!

PHIL. And supposing now at the end of that 'ere time he was to make a slip, would his six-and-forty year of service and general good character make folk think a little less hard on him?

—MR. H. Without a doubt; but what on earth—

PHIL. That'll do, sir, thank you—you may call 'em in now; shall I ring, sir?

—MR. H. No, I'll do it. (*goes up, and rings bell*)

PHIL. (*aside*) I think I'm screwed up pretty tight now—if I don't run down again!

Enter SERVANT, C. from L.

—MR. H. Desire the ladies, Mr. Lionel, and Mr. Stapleton to step here.

Exit SERVANT, door, L. 2 E.

This is a very mysterious and solemn proceeding, Phil!

PHIL. A solemn thing's got to be done, sir.

—MR. H. (*places chair, C.*) Why, Phil, you are all in a tremble—are you ill?

PHIL. (*seated*) No, sir; but please don't speak to me. (*aside*) I am hot and cold a dozen times a minute.

—MR. H. (*aside*) What can the old man intend doing!

Enter MARION, FRANK, C., LIONEL and BLANCHE, door, L. 2 E.

MARION. What is it, papa?

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— MR. H. Nay, Marion, you must ask Phil; I know only one thing, which I very proudly tell you, Frank is innocent!

MARION. (R.) I *knew* it! now let those blush who dare think otherwise.

— MR. H. I will say no more now, Frank, but this: your pardon and your hand.

FRANK. Oh, sir!

MARION. But who is the culprit, papa, the wretch who has caused us all this distress?

— MR. H. That question you must put to Phil, Marion, he seems to be the only one who knows anything about it.

PHIL. Aye, old Phil don't want any asking, he's a going to make a clean breast of it, Phil is. Mr. Hardress, sir, a certain sum of money's a missing from your private safe?

— MR. H. Truly.

PHIL. And that 'ere safe was opened with—a false key?

— MR. H. Well?

PHIL. Which false key fell out o' my boy's coat pocket?

— MR. H. Exactly.

PHIL. Not quite exactly—which false key *seemed* to fall out o' my boy's coat pocket.

— MR. H. How!

PHIL. Where was that 'ere coat when the key fell out?

— MR. H. In your hands, Phil.

PHIL. Why in course it was, and out o' my hands fell that 'ere key.

(R. MARION, MR. H., PHIL, FRANK, BLANCHE, LIONEL. L.)

— MR. H. What!

PHIL. Yes, I'm a bad old villain—a precious old hypocrite—a miserable specimen of a grayheaded old sinner. *It was me as stole that money!*

MARION. Phil!

— MR. H. You! preposterous!

FRANK. (*aside to PHIL*) Father, I will not suffer this.

PHIL. (*to him*) Better me than you, my boy; *he* must be spared. (*aloud*) Yes, me as stole it! I've been a clever old rascal, ain't I? no one ever thought as old Phil was—a thief. (*holds on to back of chair—aside*) Courage, old boy! keep up.

FRANK. (*aside to him*) Father, for heaven's sake—

PHIL. (*to him*) If you say a word agin it, I'll tell the truth.

MARION. Oh, Phil! I cannot believe this.

BLANCHE. Nor can I.

— MR. H. And I *will* not believe it, without far better proof than this bare assertion.

PHIL. Well, Mr. Hardress, better proof's a coming; there can't be no better proof than the bringing forard the very notes

as was stolen. (*fumbling in his pocket and producing notes*) And there they are; and if that ain't evidence enough to convict a old sinner, why I've done.

— MR. H. This is indeed a terrible and most painful surprise; but with that evidence—Oh, Phil! I should never have thought this.

MARION. (*crossing to PHIL*) Oh, Phil! Phil! how *could* you do it?

PHIL. Don't, please don't speak to me like that; I feel quite faint like.

FRANK. (*aside to PHIL*) Father, recal this mad accusation! I—

PHIL. No! Frank, boy, let me be, it's done now; I don't think I shall last much longer now.

— MR. H. I will not ask you, old man, why you have done this. When were the notes taken?

PHIL. The day before yesterday, sir.

— MR. H. Then indeed, I have no right to do so, for then I had no interest in the house. To my son I must commit the charge of dealing with you, for the day before that I transferred the entire business to him; it was he whom you robbed, let him do as he pleases.

PHIL. (*feebly*) Everything's right now, ain't it? no one hurt but old Phil, you must pity poor old Phil, a very harmless honest old man; for six and forty year, never wronged nobody—went bad at last—weak old man, took to thiev— (*he faints, they all run to him*)

FRANK. Heaven! he is dying!

MARION. Phil! Phil!

LIONEL. (*unable to control himself*) Oh, father! father! I can bear this no longer—here, here! (*crosses to R., and hurries MR. HARDRESS off, door, R. 1. E.*)

BLANCHE. Why what ails Lionel?

MARION. Frank, what does all this mean?

FRANK. Believe me, Marion, the old man's brain is wandering; he no more committed this robbery than I did.

MARION. But the notes?

FRANK. A mystery.

BLANCHE. See—he is recovering.

PHIL. (*recovering*) Eh! where am I—what's all this crowd? ah, Frank—Miss Marion, I remember now; where's master? (*looking eagerly round*) where's Mr Lion—ah! (*starting up*) they are gone; where is master? I will see him.

Re-enter MR. HARDRESS, very pale, and LIONEL, door. R.

FRANK. (*aside to LIONEL*) You have confessed?

LIONEL. All! (*crosses behind to L.*)

PHIL. (*running to MR. HARDRESS*) They've been a talking to you—a deceiving you—not a word true, only what old Phil said.

— MR. H. Phil, my old friend, I am deceived no longer.

MARION. Oh, papa, do tell us what is——

— MR. H. Not a word here, Marion: there is atonement to be made, heavy atonement, but only in the bosom of our family can it be done, into which family, my noble and generous old friend, (*taking PHIL's hand*) from this hour, I receive you.

PHIL. Me in the family of Hardress and Co.?

— MR. H. Yes, Phil, henceforth as a brother, and your son as my daughter's husband.

PHIL. Then you *won't* believe as how old Phil stole——

— MR. H. I know all; I know that it was the right hand that robbed the left—but there is much to be done, before the guilt of that right hand is purged away. Now not a word more.

PHIL. (*coming forward*) Yes, one or two; will you who have so kindly supported old Phil through his troubles, give him a kindly word at parting—in token, that at least, *he* has not broken into your hearts, and stolen your sympathies, by means of a false key. Talk about important events occurring on my birthday; I don't mind admitting, that yesterday was rather too much for me, still, if the conduct of an old servant who tried to be faithful to the last, has won your sympathy and approval, there may yet be a pleasant remembrance of “Old Phil's Birthday.”

Curtain.

FRANK. MARION. MR. H. PHIL. BLANCHE. LIONEL.

R.

L.

order (J.P.)

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

An original Comedietta,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

*Sisterly Service, Plots for Petticoats, Language of Flowers,
Allow me to Apologize, Founded on Facts, A Twice-told Tale,
Old Phil's Birthday, A Model Husband, I'll write to the Times,
Love in Livery, &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,)

LONDON.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

*First produced at the Royal Strand Theatre,
(under the management of Mr. Swanborough, Sen.,)
Thursday, February 20, 1862.*

Characters.

COLONEL CLARENCE	Mr. RAY.
MR. FALCON HOPE.....	Mr. BELFORD.
MR. SEPTIMUS SYMMETRY	Mr. CLARKE.
VIOLET HOPE (<i>Wife to Hope</i>)	Miss CARSON.
ISABELLA CLARENCE (<i>Wife to the Colonel</i>)	Miss BUFTON.
LOUISA	Miss JOSEPHS.

SCENE—SYMMETRY'S GARDEN.

TIME—THE PRESENT.

Costumes—MODERN.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

SCENE.—*Garden attached to Symmetry's House; Summer House, R. 2 E.; door and window practicable; Shrubbery, L. C.; Terrace, L. 2 E., practicable; garden chairs placed about stage.*

SYMMETRY *discovered sitting on rail of garden chair, C., his feet in the seat, a letter in his hand.*

SYM. (*coming down*) Upon my word, credit, honour, and reputation! this is too bad! this perpetual and preposterous persecution of the free men of Great Britain by the unblushing women of those three kingdoms, passes all bearing and beggars all belief. Here's poor Falcon Hope fallen a victim to that designing coquette Violet Fane; not but that he brought the mischief on his own fool's head—he was always chevying the girls about—but it is positively a frightful state of things, and a stand must be made against it; these brigands in crinoline and bandoline must be put down, and I must go into Parliament to do it, or hang me if I shan't have some woman coming down to marry me next! Surely some law can be brought to work, to check this monstrous and merciless marauding, upon the hearths and hearts of helpless British bachelors; but laws generally are in a queer state, the laws of society are clearly out of joint, the laws of nations are simply preposterous, and it's not clear to me, that the laws of Nature don't want looking into. Still I've done my best to steer clear of the soft sex myself—soft! I never saw anything soft in the sex; precious clear-headed, sharp-sighted bandits I've found 'em all. Still, I left London, buried myself in the country, and picked my neighbours; there isn't a pretty girl in the village—in fact, all the women squint, except three, who're blind and can't, so I naturally thought I should be allowed to exist in a comparative state of safety; and yet this week has annihilated all my hopes, not only has that unutterable imbecile of a Clarence taken a house nearly next door, with that sky-larking cousin of mine, his wife, but now, by way of piling up the agony, I receive this impertinent and cold-blooded epistle. Let me see it once more. (*reads*) “Dear Sym,—You are aware of my having

become the happiest dog in existence, by the fact of winning my darling Violet." Poor devil! "We have just returned from Paris, and before settling down to work, I have determined to spend a few days with my old friend Symmetry, to whom I long to introduce my dear little wife. Expect us to-morrow. Yours always, Falcon Hope. P.S. I shall bring little Loo with me, as I know she will be as welcome as myself." Little Loo! who's little Loo? it can't be a —no, his calamity has not befallen him long enough for that! then who the deuce is little Loo? If I don't play my cards pretty cleverly, they'll *loo* me among 'em! Well, if things come to the worst I can emigrate; I should be safe in some Ojibbeway settlement, and that's what I shall have to do.—That villanous codicil! Ahem!

Enter ISABELLA CLARENCE, R. 1 E.

ISABEL. Well, here I am, cousin Septimus!

SYM. Yes, here you are—(*aside*) as we said at school; "*bella horrida bella*," (*aloud*)—and you're not the only misfortune that's to befall me to-day.

ISABEL. Gallant as ever; what now?

SYM. Just run your eye over my wretched face, and the other over that horrid dispatch.

ISABEL. As that would involve an absolute squint, cousin, I shall devote both my eyes to the letter, with your permission. (*reads*)

SYM. (*aside*) I wonder where all this is to end; however, it's rather premature to speculate upon that—it's only just begun.

ISABEL. Why this is absolutely delightful, Septimus.

SYM. Is it?

ISABEL. Poor Falcon Hope! how glad I shall be to see him again; you know he was somewhat smitten with me once.

SYM. Was he? I'm not surprised; he seems fool enough for anything.

ISABEL. Thank you. But whom did he marry? he calls her Violet; what was her other name?

SYM. Fane.

ISABEL. Indeed! why this is better and better; oh! what a delicious meeting; why you must know that my dear old Colonel proposed to her, before he saw me.

SYM. He seems rather partial to ladies, young enough to be his daughters; as some ladies I have heard of, take fancies to men old enough to be their grandfathers.

ISABEL. Very well aimed, cousin, but it misses the mark; bless you, you can't put me out of conceit with my dear old husband; not that he's an hour older than I approve of, for to tell you a very sober truth, Septimus, I admire gray hair, and were I free tomorrow, would rather marry a man of fifty, than one of twenty.

SYM. Well, I can only reply, that you're a woman, and there's no understanding any one of the sex; all I know is, the dear Colonel's a precious old ape.

ISABEL. Cousin!

SYM. And tries to make love to every girl he meets.

ISABEL. He is welcome to do so if it amuses him. It's no use, Septimus, you can't put me out of temper. Now do you know what I've made up my mind to do?

SYM. That's good! No ma'am; what you've made up that very small parcel you call your mind for, I do not know.

ISABEL. Well, I've made up my mind to marry you.

SYM. The deuce you have! are you going to assassinate your other husband?

ISABEL. Not yet.

SYM. Well, we can't have any bigamy, so how are you going to do it?

ISABEL. You foolish fellow, you don't suppose I'm going to marry you myself; I mean I'll marry you to some one else.

SYM. Will you? You're very kind I'm sure.

ISABEL. Yes! depend upon it; I shall see you married before long.

SYM. You may see me hanged; it's much more likely—in fact it's not improbable that I shall hang myself, if this persecution is to go on.

ISABEL. And pray in default of wife and family, may I take the liberty of asking, to whom you intend to leave all your money?

SYM. I shall endow a college for decayed bachelors—for those heroes who have fought the good fight and come off victorious. Stop a moment, there's one legacy I mean to leave, and that's to a lady.

ISABEL. A lady! you leave a legacy to a lady?

SYM. Yes! to the only woman I really respect on earth.

ISABEL. How complimentary you are, cousin.

SYM. Am I? I beg your pardon, I didn't intend it. But it is a debt of gratitude I am bound to discharge. I was once—I presume in a fit of temporary insanity—rash enough to propose to that lady.

ISABEL. Good gracious! and she?

SYM. The blessings of a grateful heart upon her, she refused me! I feel the heavy amount of obligation I owe her, and shall feebly attempt to discharge it, by leaving her a thousand pounds.

ISABEL. Oh, cousin! why didn't you ask me, I'd have refused you for five hundred?

SYM. Then you'd have done it very reasonably, that's all I have to say; but I say, are you not wasting your time here? you must have a great deal to do at home.

ISABEL. Oh, bless you, no! Clarence and I intended spending the day with you; (SYM. *groans*) but, of course, as you have ladies coming, you must have a lady to entertain them; therefore, while they remain, I shall oblige you by taking up my abode here altogether.

SYM. (*gives a slight scream*) What! do you mean to tell me that I am to be shut up for a *week*, in the same house with two married women and one little Loo?

ISABEL. Exactly! unless we can induce them to stay a *fort-night*!

SYM. Then I had better send for a keeper and a straight waistcoat at once, that's all.

ISABEL. By-the-bye, who is little Loo?

SYM. Oh, what do I know or care about little Loo! I only hope they'll *loose* her on the road.

ISABEL. You are full of wit and humanity, cousin; but here comes my lord and master, so I'll take myself off. (*crosses, L.*)

SYM. I can't blame him for coming, when he affects so pleasant a diversion in my favour; and when he has succeeded in the desirable manœuvre of taking *you* off, I trust that some providential interference will take *him* off too.

ISABEL. I shall take the liberty, in return for that highly complimentary remark, of superintending the preparation of the best bed rooms in the house for your visitors—no thanks.—and sans adieu!—for I shall see that agreeable face of yours again very shortly.

Exit up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. Shall you? I think it doubtful. Now to be bored by Clarence and his twaddle—for next to being talked to *by* a woman, the most objectionable thing is being talked to *about* women, and he can talk of nothing else—ha! an idea! Surely, from what Isabel told me about the previous attachments between these two couples, I can create some confusion among 'em, and punish these men for forcing their wives upon me. I shall be on the look out.

Enter COLONEL CLARENCE, R. 1 E.

COLONEL. I say, Symmetry, I'll swear I saw the skirt of a petticoat vanish past the shrubbery. Are you stealing a march upon us after all, eh?

SYM. You did see a petticoat, Colonel, and one you ought to know and tremble at. It was your wife.

COLONEL. Oh, was it? (*aside*) And she ran away as I approached? I've often had my suspicions of this woman-hater. I must keep an eye on him. (*aloud*) Well, my boy, any news?

SYM. Yes, as disastrous news as need be. I've got some women coming to see me.

COLONEL. Women? Electric sound!

SYM. Galvanic shock!

COLONEL. Are they young—pretty?

SYM. You ought to be the best judge of that, as one of them was an old flame of yours.

COLONEL. Ah! (*aside*) This is exciting.

SYM. I'm told so—or perhaps it was her mother.

COLONEL. Sir!

SYM. Well, how can I tell? This, is a young woman, once known as Violet Fane.

COLONEL. Violet Fane! (*aside*) Meet her again? (*aloud*) Mr. Symmetry, you have broken the sealed tomb of the past.

SYM. Have I? Is there anything in it?

COLONEL. Yes, sir—crushed affections, blighted hopes, and bitter memories. That young person, sir, once rejected this hand—declined this person—renounced this heart.

SYM. No—did she, though?

COLONEL. Symmetry, I am not quite certain that I ought to meet that young person.

SYM. Well, luckily for you, it's optional whether you do or not. I wish I could say the same. I should certainly advise you to go home at once, and take your wife with you.

COLONEL. No—that would be cowardly, despicable. I will brave destiny and see her.

SYM. I say, just allow me to observe that I don't see what destiny you have to brave, in connexion with Mrs. Hope. I believe you have formed a matrimonial alliance with another lady, and I, sir, as the cousin of that lady, cannot permit—Pshaw!—What do I care about it? Do as you like—shoot the husband—marry the widow—get hanged for murder, or transported for bigamy. What the deuce is it to me?

COLONEL. This is strange language, Mr. Symmetry.

SYM. Well, then, don't compel me to ruffle my serene temper about a woman. See! you've brought one upon us!

Enter ISABEL from terrace, L. 2 E.

ISABEL. Oh! cousin, they are coming; I saw them drive up to the gate, and I saw little Loo, and she's the queerest looking thing! I told Charles to send them at once into the garden—isn't it delightful, my dear Clarence? Of course you know all about it?

COLONEL. Yes, my dear, yes. (*aside to SYM.*) It will not be necessary, Mr. Symmetry, to mention any portion of our recent conversation to Mrs. Clarence.

SYM. (*to him*) Don't be alarmed. (*aside*) I'll set 'em all by the ears, if I can. (*aloud*) Why didn't you let 'em stay in the house; the ladies might like to go to bed perhaps.

ISABEL. Not they—with such a fascinating host; see, here they come!

SYM. Oh! I'm not going to look fascinating; they shan't

be forming any idea of my personal attractions. (*tumbles his hair, &c.*)

ISABEL. For goodness sake, cousin!

Enter FALCON HOPE, VIOLET, and LOUISA, down terrace, L. 2 E., in travelling costumes.

FALCON. Ah, Symmetry, my dear fellow!

SYM. I'm very glad to see you, (*aside to him*) but why the plague couldn't you come alone?

FALCON. (*aside to him*) The old perverted taste, eh? found no girl agreeable yet. (*aloud*) Allow me to introduce my wife to you—Violet, my love, Mr. Symmetry.

VIOLET. (*aside*) Symmetry itself! What a fright!

FALCON. I have another friend here, Symmetry, my cousin Loo; Louisa, come here and be introduced, will you?

LOUISA. Yes, if you like—it isn't of any great consequence.

SYM. (*aside*) Sensible girl that!

FALCON. You have friends here too, Symmetry; pray make us acquainted? (*seeing ISABEL, R.*) What, Miss Brandon!

VIOLET. (L. C.) What, you know this lady, Falcon?

FALCON. No—yes—that is——(*confused.*)

SYM. This is not Miss Brandon, but the wife of that gentleman, Colonel Clarence.

VIOLET. (*starts, seeing the COLONEL, R. C., for the first time*) Colonel Clarence!

FALCON. You know this gentleman, Violet?

VIOLET. (*confused*) No—yes—that is——(*aside*) how exceedingly awkward!

FALCON. (*uneasily*) Ahem! (*gaily*) Oh, well; old friends—so much the better; make the visit the more agreeable for my part. I was once fortunate enough to be acquainted with Miss Brandon, but it was a mere flying acquaintance.

ISABEL. Which Mrs. Clarence will be delighted to extend, Mr. Hope. (*they shake hands*)

COLONEL. (*aside*) Ahem! I once (*aloud*) also had the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Miss Fane. (*crosses to her*)

VIOLET. Which Mrs. Hope is charmed to renew, colonel.

FALCON. (*aside*) Ahem! (*a general restraint is visible.*)

SYM. (*aside*) It begins beautifully; the men are clearly out of temper, and the women seem disposed to keep them there.

ISABEL. (*aside*) I must take an opportunity of seeing Violet Hope alone.

VIOLET. (*aside*) I must manage to see Mrs. Clarence privately.

SYM. (*aside*) I'll be hanged if I caa think of anything to say, but I must go in for something. (*aloud*) This isn't such an ugly den, is it?

FALCON. Delightful ! }
 VIOLET. Delicious ! } (*looking round*)

LOUISA. (L.) Much too nice a den for such a creature as a man.

FALCON. Louisa !

VIOLET. For shame !

SYM. (*aside*) That's a most extraordinary young female—I begin to take quite an interest in her.

VIOLET. You appear to be very fond of flowers, Mr. Symmetry.

SYM. Yes, ma'am,—of all but orange blossoms.

FALCON. Never mind him, Violet—he's quite incurable; what with Symmetry's denunciations of women, and little Loo's onslaught upon men, we may expect some fun. But come, Sym, show us round the grounds—the ladies will join us.

SYM. (*aside to him, pulling his coat*) No, no; confound you, be quiet.

ISABEL. I think you must excuse us at present—these ladies may have some change to make in their dress. What say you, madam ? (*crosses to VIOLET*)

VIOLET. I would rather defer the pleasure until by-and-bye.

SYM. (*to FALCON*) Come along at once; they'll change their minds in half a minute.

VIOLET. We shall not be long, Falcon.

SYM. Oh, pray don't hurry.

ISABEL. This way, ladies.

Exeunt ISABEL, VIOLET, and LOUISA, up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. (C.) That's quite a relief, isn't it ?

FALCON. (L.) Relief, you reprobate !

COLONEL. (R.) The sun seems entirely extinguished !

SYM. Oh, never mind the sun, so that the daughters are extinguished.

FALCON. I say Sym, you've hit upon a nice North American Indian style of dressing your hair.

SYM. Yes, I may as well get into their ways at once; I shall be among 'em soon I fancy.

FALCON. What may you mean by that ?

SYM. Well, I may as well tell you all about it, altho' I don't much like telling secrets to married men; however, I'll risk it. You may have remarked that I have usually a good flow of spirits ? (*sits, C.*)

FALCON. Certainly. (*seated, L. C.*)

COLONEL. Always cheerful. (*seated, R.*)

SYM. All assumed; there is a canker, gentlemen, at my heart's core.

FALCON. What ?

COLONEL. Where ?

SYM. Fact—tell you all about it. You know that old Guy Fawkes of an uncle of mine, who left me all his property ?

FALCON. Certainly; my father made the will.

SYM. He did, and be hanged to him! Do you happen to know the fiendish codicil he attached to that will?

FALCON. (*aside*) Perfectly. (*aloud*) My dear Sym, how should I?

SYM. Well, the human mind is scarcely capable of conceiving such cold-blooded inhumanity; he actually tacked this condition to his bequest—that if I did not marry before I was thirty-five years of age, nearly the whole of the property goes to another person.

COLONEL. Awkward.

FALCON. (*aloud*) And who is the fortunate recipient, in case you don't marry?

SYM. Why, sir—to culminate his diabolical ingenuity—a woman, sir—actually a woman—a certain Miss Dudley, whom I never saw!

FALCON. And is Miss Dudley aware of this state of things?

SYM. No—she is to be kept in the dark till the time arrives.

FALCON. And how old are you now, pray?

SYM. Who—I—how old? Oh! rising thirty-four.

FALCON. Will you swear you are *not* thirty-five next week?

SYM. Certainly not—I'll swear *I am*.

FALCON. (*aside*) I know that. (*aloud*) And what do you purpose doing—marrying?

SYM. Mar—— Don't be offensive, sir!

COLONEL. Then, what the deuce do you mean to do?

SYM. Why, if there is any way of circumventing this female Dudley——

FALCON. Don't imagine it; my father is too careful to have left any loophole, and depend upon it, he will see the matter properly carried out, for his own reputation's sake.

SYM. Then I shall go and join a tribe of Chocktaw Indians, get tattooed, and live comfortably; but don't let's talk any more about it—we've got the week before us, and we'll amuse ourselves. (*aside*) I shall begin by making you two comfortable.

COLONEL. Marry my young friend—marry, by all means.

SYM. Oh!—you've always some sensible advice to give; but even if I were maniac enough to entertain the idea, how could I be sure of getting the right wife. Now here's a case in point. My friend Hope, here, you know, was desperately in love with Isabel——

COLONEL. What, sir?

FALCON. (*aside to SYM.*) Hold your confounded tongue—do!

SYM. Oh, dear yes, Colonel, didn't you know that? it was the merest chance in the world that *you* got her—I know she was extravagantly in love with Hope.

FALCON. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Are you crazy?

COLONEL. This, I presume, sir, was the "flying acquaintance" you had with Miss Brandon?

FALCON. My dear Colonel, this is an egregious error on our friend's part. I certainly did meet Miss Brandon, and might have been dazzled for the moment—but only for the moment, believe me.

COLONEL. This is a delicate subject, and I hardly know how to treat it.

FALCON. Treat it as it deserves, Colonel—it is mere nonsense, be assured. Any partiality I may have felt for Miss Brandon has long since been merged in my devotion to my wife.

COLONEL. As a man of honour, sir, I am bound to believe you. (*aside*) I shall keep my eye upon you, notwithstanding.

SYM. Yes, that's all very well, but there's another case in point—the Colonel, here, ought by right to have married Miss Fane.

FALCON. Sir!

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Can't you keep your fool's tongue quiet?

SYM. Bless you, yes—didn't you know that, my dear Hope? they were mad after each other.

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Confound you! be still, will you?

FALCON. This, I presume, Colonel, was the "slight acquaintance" you spoke of?

COLONEL. The fact is, Mr. Hope—I once—that is to say--

SYM. Twice, perhaps—come, no shuffling—speak out.

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) I'll assassinate you, you booby!

FALCON. (*laughingly*) Well, never mind—Symmetry has exposed us both, let it pass—we are matched to our liking at last. (*aside*) I'll not lose sight of you, my gay Colonel.

SYM. Well, now that I have put you on a friendly footing, and already demonstrated to you that you have each of you married the wrong woman, let us go and look round the property.

FALCON. By all means. (*aside*) I can't think what on earth could have possessed Violet to take any notice of that stick of a Colonel.

COLONEL. (*aside*) What could Isabel have seen in that puppy, I wonder.

SYM. (*aside*) I haven't done amiss for a beginning—I see the makings of a very pretty disturbance—I'll keep the game alive—I'll wake 'em up again presently. (*aloud*) This way—you lively husbands!

Exeunt, R. U. E.

Re-enter ISABEL and VIOLET down terrace, L. 2 E.

ISABEL. Believe me, my dear Mrs Hope, I am delighted, as Mr. Symmetry's cousin, to receive you in his house, and shall do my best to entertain you.

VIOLET. Believe me, my dear madam, I am equally delighted with the fact of becoming your guest.

ISABEL. I intend that you and I shall be very intimate friends.

VIOLET. An intention I shall only be too happy to second.

ISABEL. And to show you how sincere I am, I am about to take the privilege of an old friend thus early, by asking you a favour.

VIOLET. Dear me, how remarkable—do you know, I was about to ask one of you?

ISABEL. No? (*aside*) What can she mean?

VIOLET. No! (*aside*) What can she want?

ISABEL. The fact is—(*aside*) This is a ridiculous position—it isn't likely she ever heard of her husband's attentions to me.

VIOLET. My object—(*aside*) This is extremely embarrassing—of course, she knows nothing of Clarence's attentions to me.

ISABEL. You said you wished to ask a favour—pray speak.

VIOLET. Pray let me have the pleasure of obliging you first.

ISABEL. This will never do—let us be frank—I will set the example. I am perfectly aware that previous to my marriage, Clarence had the good taste to make proposals to you.

VIOLET. You knew it? (*aside*) What a relief!

ISABEL. Yes, and I know something else, of which you may be probably ignorant, namely, that before your marriage, Mr. Hope had the bad taste to do me the same honour.

VIOLET. (*coolly*) I was certainly quite ignorant of that, Mrs. Clarence.

ISABEL. Oh, be very easy, my dear—if I had liked him, I should have married him—as I didn't, I married somebody else. Now, we are both sensible women, and perfectly contented with the husbands we have—is it not so?

VIOLET. On my side—undoubtedly.

ISABEL. (*holding out her hand*) And no worse friends, for having changed partners in the fantastic dance of matrimony—eh?

VIOLET. (*taking her hand*) Oh, no, no, my dear Mrs. Clarence, I was only a little fool for a moment—forgive me, it is a frequent occurrence.

ISABEL. Now, that we understand each other, let us to the business, or rather pleasure of a mutual obligation—will you commence?

VIOLET. No—do you.

ISABEL. Very well—you must promise not to be angry.

VIOLET. Gladly, for I shall have to exact the same promise from you.

ISABEL. That's agreed, then, on either side. Well, you must know that during the trifling intercourse between Mr. Hope and myself——

VIOLET. That is exactly as I should begin—substituting Colonel Clarence.

ISABEL. I was indiscreet enough——

VIOLET. The very word—our stories commence quite harmoniously.

ISABEL. Indiscreet enough to——

VIOLET. Enter into a correspondence; go on.

ISABEL. Not at all, I never wrote the man a line in my life.

VIOLET. Good gracious! then what were you indiscreet enough to do?

ISABEL. I was miserably weak enough to give him my portrait.

VIOLET. Oh! (*aside*) and I daren't say anything about it!

ISABEL. Now, my dear Mrs. Hope, only get me back that stupid portrait, and I will do anything in the wide world for you, in return.

VIOLET. I must be frank, also; I will take up your story at the word “indiscreet.” I was indiscreet enough to——

ISABEL. To give Clarence your likeness.

VIOLET. Never; not even a black profile.

ISABEL. Then, what in mercy's name were you indiscreet enough to do?

VIOLET. To write him certain ridiculous, unmeaning letters. Oh! Mrs. Clarence, only get me back those letters——

ISABEL. Ha! ha! your letters for my portrait—a bargain! Now, it's just possible Mr. Hope may have that portrait with him.

VIOLET. Oh, dear no, I am quite sure he couldn't do that.

ISABEL. Bless you, men do those things! Clarence carries one or two about with him wherever he goes; but he knows I am not jealous, so pray don't you be so.

VIOLET. Oh! bless you, not the least in the world. (*aside*) If he has!

ISABEL. Now, look here, I have the privilege of all my dear husband's desks, &c.—I'll tell you what we'll do—can you overlook Mr. Hope's dressing-case and trunks?

VIOLET. I have the keys of everything,

ISABEL. Good, then we'll not lose a moment, you go and search for my portrait, whilst I run home and search for your letters.

VIOLET. Agreed.

ISABEL. And as we may have no other opportunity of a private conversation, we may as well fix upon some signal of success or failure in our search—I shall be an agony till I know.

VIOLET. And I, in absolute despair!

ISABEL. Let me see, I have it—a red rose shall be the signal of success, a white one of failure.

VIOLET. Agreed; but if I meet Falcon first, and he sees me with a flower, it's in his coat the next moment.

ISABEL. I'm full of ideas this morning, I have another, we'll make my cousin Symmetry our signal post—we will each, when we meet him, present him with a rose, white or red, as it may be.

VIOLET. But he will never receive a flower from a lady.

ISABEL. Bless you, he couldn't in common courtesy refuse one from you, and I'll make him take mine.

VIOLET. So be it, then; had we not better proceed to work at once?

ISABEL. The sooner the better; stay, to guard against contingencies, it will be as well if we succeed to deposit our spoil in the summer house, there no one ever enters it—yon can put the picture in at that little window, as I will the letters; so we can take possession, without suspicion, at any time.

VIOLET. I shall remember, and fortune grant us success!

ISABEL. Amen to that sweet prayer.

Exit, R. 1 E., VIOLET up terrace, L. 2 E.

Re-enter SYMMETRY, R. U. E.

SYM. Thank goodness I've made my escape from those married men! their conversation, to say the least of it, is of a highly objectionable character—in fact, it's hopeless twaddle; they talk nothing but nonsense, and they don't even talk that well. Hilloa! here comes little Loo, the “man-hater,” as Falcon calls her, so much the better.

Enter LOUISA down terrace, L. 2 E.

So, young lady, I've heard your character from the gentlemen.

LOUISA. And I yours from the ladies; they were neither, I believe, worth hearing.

SYM. And you hate men, do you?

LOUISA. As much as you hate women.

SYM. Then, of course, you hate me.

LOUISA. Oh! I can just put up with you; there's not much of you, and what there is, is not of much account.

SYM. (*aside*) Upon my word, this little Loo's quite refreshing. (*aloud*) I suppose you never mean to be married?

LOUISA. Not till a "hot January," as Beatrice says.

SYM. Ah! that would have been a magnificent play if Shakespeare had not spoiled it by making Benedict fool enough to marry Beatrice.

LOUISA. Reverse it, and say if he had not made Beatrice fool enough to marry Benedict.

SYM. Let us accommodate matters by setting them both down as fools together.

LOUISA. Just my opinion.

SYM. (*aside*) I can get on magnificently with little Loo. (*aloud*) Falcon and his wife agree tolerably well, eh?

LOUISA. Indifferently so at present—the orange blossoms haven't faded yet.

SYM. Orange blossoms! Bah! I'd as soon see a woman with spring onions in her bonnet!

LOUISA. Just my opinion.

SYM. We really agree in a most surprising manner. I must know more of you.

LOUISA. You know enough; you'll like me less the more you know of me.

SYM. That's very possible; but do you know you're about the only woman whose visit I have ever approved of.

LOUISA. I am an involuntary visitor—they brought me here. I had no wish to come, be assured.

SYM. I like you all the better for it—that is, mind, I don't mean that I like you at all. (*aside*) Sym, my fine fellow, you'd better pull up. (*aloud*) I mean——

LOUISA. It's very immaterial what. Have you anything more to say?

SYM. Not at present, I think. Oh!—stop—yes—you adhere to that resolution of yours—never marry. If they would compel you, run away, and never be taken alive.

LOUISA. Let me return that invaluable advice; and be assured if ever I should marry, I should do so simply to be revenged on your whole sex, by the torture of that particular man I married.

SYM. Delightful candour!

LOUISA. I'd thwart him—contradict him—plague him—worry him.

SYM. (*aside*) Little Loo's a little devil.

LOUISA. In short, I'd drive him mad—there!

SYM. You wouldn't have very far to drive him; he'd be half way there before he ventured upon you.

LOUISA. I'm afraid you'll think me very free and plain spoken, but it's my nature; if you object to it, say so, and I'll go back to town.

SYM. Object? Bless you, no—you have such correct views

of things in general, and marriage in particular, it's quite delicious, and your sentiments again agree with mine, for if by any unforeseen, and impossible concatenation of diabolical circumstances I should be inveigled into marriage—— You've heard of the wife beatings in that healthy and moral village of London?

LOUISA. To my shame and sorrow, yes.

SYM. Well, they're all trifles to what the woman would get who married me.

LOUISA. I'm sure she would deserve all she received; and now, sir, good morning.

SYM. Good morning, miss; I think we quite understand each other, and we've had a very pleasant and intellectual conversation.

Exit LOUISA up terrace, L. 2 E.

I've quite enjoyed it, upon my word; that little Loo is one of the most sensible girls I ever met with. If all women were like her now, and had the same opinion of mankind, how swimmingly we should all go on together. Now then, this won't do; here's another woman hunting me up—it's Mrs. Hope, and hang me, if she hasn't got one of my choicest white roses in her hand—just like 'em—they can't keep their hands off anything.

Enter VIOLET down terrace, L. 2 E., with a white rose.

VIOLET. (*aside*) I can't find it. I knew he would never carry that trumpery portrait about with him. (*aloud*) Oh, my dear Mr. Symmetry, I was looking for you. You must allow me to present you with this beautiful white rose; you can't refuse to wear it for my sake! (*fastens it to his coat*)

SYM. (*aside*) No, I don't see well how I can, or I would. (*aloud*) I'm sure I'm uncommonly flattered.

VIOLET. Oh, pray don't mention it; and above all, pray don't think of thanking me.

SYM. (*aside*) I should like to blow you up for picking my flowers.

VIOLET. I'm sure you'll excuse my running away——

SYM. Oh, certainly.

VIOLET. As I have left little Loo in your pretty conservatory.

Exit up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. And a pretty conservatory it will be when little Loo comes out of it, I expect. Now, what does this white rose mean? there's some design in it, I'll lay a wager. Eh? what? no! yes! why, damn it! here's another woman bearing down, with another rose. Its my free and easy cousin. Oh, I must get out of this!

Enter ISABELLA, R. 1 E., with red rose and packet of letters.

ISABEL. (*aside*) I've found these precious documents, and I

dare say they were well worth looking for. (*aloud*) Ah, cousin—What do I see, a white rose? (*aside*) Then she has failed.

SYM. (*warmly*) Yes, and I see a red rose. Now, I tell you what it is, Cousin Isabel, I know I'm a mild man, I believe I am generally looked upon as a soft man, but if a pack of mischievous females go about my grounds damaging my plants you'll see me in one of the most stupendous passions—you will witness one of the most demoniac outbursts of fury——

ISABEL. Don't get excited, my dear Septimus, but just put this rose in your coat, and compose yourself—you know how I love you.

SYM. Am I to be stuck all over with roses?—if I do, I'm—

ISABEL. Don't be a little ruffian! now just attend to me, if you don't put this rose in your coat directly, sir, I'll sit by your side, and talk to you all the evening.

SYM. (*eagerly*) Give it to me! (*fastens rose in his coat*) Life is still sweet, even under this persecution.

ISABEL. (*aside*) Gracious! if I didn't leave Clarence's desk open. (*aloud*) I think you'll excuse my running away, cousin?

SYM. I'm sure I will—good bye!

ISABEL. Ta, ta, cousin! I declare you look quite handsome, (*he turns away, she slips letters in the window of summer house*) and so good humoured—he! he! he! *Exit R. 1 E.*

SYM. Confound these women! now what is the meaning of all this? first of all, the female Hope brings me a white rose—then the female Clarence brings me a red rose—I suppose little Loo'll bring me something presently—a moss rose, perhaps, or a wreath of orange blossoms, or a stick of rhubarb from the kitchen garden! It's quite clear I'm being victimized. I see no way for it, but to pack up a small portmanteau, steal out of the back door, and “wait for the waggon!” and I'll go and do it. Ah!—catch it, Symmetry, my boy—an idea! and what an idea! beautiful! Now, my rosy beauties, I'll spoil your little game, whatever it is. I'll just give—ah, here's Falcon, that'll do very nicely. I'll begin with him—I'll entangle 'em.

Enter FALCON, R. U. E.

FALCON. Why, Symmetry, what the plague do you mean by running away from your friends in this manner? What have you been about?

SYM. Oh, bless you, I've been making myself agreeable to the ladies.

FALCON. The deuce you have! Well, as you've been so laudably and unusually occupied, I cannot complain.

SYM. Had a chat with little Loo.

FALCON. Sensible girl that !

SYM. I believe you.

FALCON. Rather strong minded, perhaps.

SYM. Well, rather.

FALCON. Now, she'd make you an excellent wife, Sym.

SYM. Yes, I dare say she would, thank you.

FALCON. I have always promised myself to get you a wife.

SYM. You're very kind ; when I want one, I'll drop you a line. Then I've been doing floricultural commissions for the other ladies.

FALCON. And I see they've not forgotten to reward you for your trouble.

SYM. Hush ! You see this red rose ?

FALCON. Clearly ; and a very fine one it is.

SYM. Well—it's for you.

FALCON. For me ! From whom ?

SYM. Never mind that ; you take it, and ask no questions.

FALCON. Oh, nonsense ! I must know who sent it.

SYM. Well, I don't think the party who sent it ought to have sent it, and I ought not to have brought it ; but then a woman can't do as she ought, and I'm such an obliging blockhead.

FALCON. Well, but who is the sender ?

SYM. Oh, I must tell you. Here—Isabella Clarence.

FALCON. (*taking it, aside*) Isabella, then, has not forgotten me ; but it is too late—my allegiance to Violet is not to be shaken. (*aloud*) I esteem the gift as from an old friend—tell her—no, I'll tell her that myself. (*puts rose in his coat*) Well, that other rose ?

SYM. Oh, that's a secret ;—you want to know a great deal too much at once. Let me give you a piece of wholesome advice : never prick your fingers with the thorns of other people's roses.

FALCON. Oh, I see ; little Loo gave it you.

SYM. Well, she did give it me—rather—in one sense—but she didn't give me this rose ; the fact is, as you are so preciously inquisitive, I had it from Mrs. Hope.

FALCON. Then why couldn't you say so at once ? What harm is there in your wearing a rose given you by my wife ?

SYM. I don't suppose there'd be any particular harm if I wore a wreath of roses ; but it isn't for me.

FALCON. No ! For whom then ?

SYM. Well, you will know. I told you you'd better not ; but if you will, it's not my fault—it's for Colonel Clarence.

FALCON. What, sir !—impossible !

SYM. Oh, you think it quite possible for Mrs. Clarence to send you a rose, but quite impossible for Mrs. Hope to send one to Colonel Clarence ?

FALCON. A different thing, sir, altogether! (*aside*) Can this be true?

SYM. Well, I look upon it as a mere tit for tat arrangement, but you know best; if you say it is impossible, I dare say it is.

FALCON. Pooh, Sym, you're only joking.

SYM. Now just look at me attentively, and tell me candidly, whether I have the appearance of a man who's given to joking.

FALCON. This is not to be borne, sir; if it be so, I know my course; if it be not so, look to yourself.

Exit angrily up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. Number one settled. I'll teach 'em how to respect a quiet gentleman's establishment, with their wives, and little Loos, and roses, and orange blossoms, and—ha! here's Clarence.

Enter COLONEL CLARENCE, R. U. E.

COLONEL. Have you seen Isabella, Symmetry?

SYM. Gone home, Colonel.

COLONEL. Oh! she'll soon be back, I suppose?

SYM. I'm afraid so.

COLONEL. That's a very handsome white rose of yours.

SYM. It's no rose of mine.

COLONEL. Indeed!

SYM. Don't make a noise—it's yours. (*gives it*)

COLONEL. Mine! To what lovely creature am I indebted for this precious gift?

SYM. Why, to me, of course.

COLONEL. Psha! Oh, I see, it's from that pretty little girl they call Louisa!

SYM. Go along, you old peacock! that pretty little girl they call Louisa, would be more likely to send you a bunch of stinging nettles.

COLONEL. Well, I must know who sent it, come.

SYM. Oh! very good, just as you please, only you'd better know nothing about it; why, you irresistible old warrior, it's from Violet Hope.

COLONEL. Is it possible! (*aside*) The charming Violet still holds me in her heart. (*puts rose in his coat*) Unhappy woman, her repentance comes too late! (*aloud*) Oh, Symmetry, you don't often find old friendships revived in this tender and grateful manner!

SYM. Not often, only occasionally. I know a very recent case——

COLONEL. Ah!

SYM. Yes, Isabel has just sent Falcon Hope a red rose.

COLONEL. Who? Sent what? Am I to understand——

SYM. Precisely what I said, you'll see it in his button hole.

COLONEL. And if I do, sir, I'll pluck it out, and force it down.

his throat ; but, let me be calm—let me first ascertain the truth of this ; you say my wife has gone home, if you have deceived me, beware !

Exit passionately, R. 1 E.

SYM. Number two disposed of, and I think the quarrel a very pretty one as it stands ; therefore, I shall interfere in it no further. I'll just place myself in a place of observation—Ah ! that summer house is the very thing ; I shall deposit myself in that private box, and enjoy an uninterrupted view of the entire entertainment. Hillos ! here comes one of the play actors ! Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, just a going to begin.

(goes into summer house R., and looks from window)

Enter FALCON highly excited, L. 2 E., down terrace.

FALCON. It was all true, I charged the perfidious woman with having had a white rose in her possession, and she could not deny it ; but by no threats, or entreaties, or commands, could I make her confess for what purpose she procured it. Never mind, I have only now to blow out the brains of that rascally old Colonel, and my business here, is at an end. I'm not sure that I ought to blow Symmetry's brains out too !

SYM. Hillos ! come I say !

FALCON. For daring to lend himself to such a piece of base disloyalty ! However, first to find this man Clarence.

Exit, R. 2 E.

SYM. I think I've got him up to fever heat and a degree or two over—good ! here comes another of the company, the heavy old man.

Enter COLONEL, R. 1 E., in a rage.

COLONEL. True, true ! every damned word of it true ! The brazen hussey owned to the having a red rose, and when I threatened to annihilate her unless she told me why she gathered it, the baggage laughed in my face, and said it was a secret—A secret ! my honour a secret, in the hands of that chattering little villain, Symmetry !

SYM. *(aside)* Now then !

COLONEL. But where is this fellow Hope ? I'll shoot him like a dog ! and as for Symmetry, I'll horsewhip him within an inch of his life.

SYM. *(aside)* The devil you will !

Enter FALCON, R. U. E.

FALCON. Now where to be seen—ha ! so, sir, at last !

COLONEL. Well met, sir ; I have to demand of you an account of that red rose you wear in your coat.

FALCON. You forestall me, sir ; I was about to demand of you an account of that white rose you wear so ostentatiously.

SYM. (*aside*) Go it, York—go it, Lancaster!

COLONEL. And suppose I refuse to render an account, sir.

FALCON. You are aware of the alternative, Colonel Clarence.

COLONEL. I wear Her Majesty's uniform, sir, which is a sufficient answer.

SYM. (*aside*) I must stop this.

Enter LOUISA, L. U. E.

FALCON. Can you furnish the weapons?

COLONEL. If you will use mine.

FALCON. Unquestionably.

COLONEL. Be kind enough to accompany me then.

SYM. (*about to call out, sees LOUISA*) Confound it; here's little Lou, again!

LOUISA. Why, what on earth's the matter?

FALCON. Nothing that concerns you, Louisa—go away.

LOUISA. Indeed I shall not, till I know the meaning of this strange conduct.

COLONEL. My dear young lady, it will be sufficient for you to understand that I am dishonoured by the rose Mr. Hope now wears.

FALCON. And I equally so by that worn by Colonel Clarence.

LOUISA. Oh, if that's the only cause of quarrel, shake hands.

SYM. (*aside*) Bravo, little Lou!

LOUISA. For you are quarrelling about things that don't concern you.

COLONEL. } What!

FALCON. }

LOUISA. I myself saw both those roses given to Mr. Symmetry.

FALCON. I am perfectly aware of that, but they were not for him.

LOUISA. I beg your pardon; I heard Mrs. Hope say, "My dear Mr. Symmetry, you cannot refuse to wear this rose, for my sake;" and Mrs. Clarence said, "Put this rose in your coat and compose yourself—you know how I love you."

(COLONEL and FALCON stare at each other in amazement)

SYM. (*aside*) That little Lou 'll be the death of me.

LOUISA. Now, gentlemen, you can of course do as you please; but if you must fight, you at least know who should be your antagonist.

Exit, L. 1 E.

SYM. (*aside*) I'll strangle that little Lou, if I'm hanged for it.

COLONEL. It appears we have been a trifle too hasty in this matter, Mr. Hope.

FALCON. We have, Colonel; and I, as the younger, frankly ask your pardon.

COLONEL. You are an honourable young man, sir, and I ask yours with all my heart. (*they shake hands*)

FALCON. So this Mr. Symmetry, this woman-hater, has dared to tamper with us in this way.

COLONEL. I have long suspected him; I believe his expressed antipathy to the sex to be sheer hypocrisy and assumed, merely to cloak the vilest enormities.

SYM. (*aside*) O you do, do you, you scurrilous old imbecile!

FALCON. Our views with regard to him are identical.

COLONEL. I understand you—certainly.

SYM. (*aside*) I don't.

FALCON. The only question is which shall have the first shot at him.

COLONEL. I claim that, by virtue of seniority.

SYM. (*aside*) Oh, you stupid old fool!

FALCON. I think it is rather due to me as a guest.

SYM. (*aside*) Oh, settle it as you please, pray.

COLONEL. I cannot consent to waive my right.

SYM. (*aside*) Perhaps you'd like to come on both at once.

FALCON. Well, let us each go in search of him. Whichever is lucky enough to meet him first shall take precedence.

COLONEL. Agreed; but we may as well change roses first. (*they do so*) I'll take this path. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

FALCON. And I this. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

SYM. (*comes out with packet of letters in his hand, and sings very softly*)

"Come open yon gates, and let me gang free,

For I darna stay longer in Bonny Dundee."

Well, I think I've done it now; I've certainly put this handsome foot of mine pretty deeply into it. I must be off; I should like to tumble across little Loo, though, before I go. I'd—I'd—I'd—what's this packet?—"Letters from Violet." Why, I found 'em among the tools in the summer house; she must have been in correspondence with the gardener! She's a beauty! but I can't stop to overhaul 'em now, I shall have the Philistines upon me. (*as he is going, L. 1 E. meets FALCON*) Oh!

FALCON. Stop, sir!

SYM. Cau't—violent hurry! (*as he is about to run off, R. 1 E., meets COLONEL*) Ah!

COLONEL. Stop, sir!

FALCON. Don Juan!

COLONEL. Lovelace!

FALCON. Faublas!

SYM. Go on!—anybody else?

COLONEL. Hypocrite!

FALCON. Traitor!

COLONEL. Is this your friendship?

FALCON. Is this your hospitality?

SYM. I wish to gracious you'd all of you go back to London.

FALCON. This rose was given to you, sir, by my wife.

COLONEL. And this by mine.

SYM. Yes; and I wish both your wives would let my roses alone.

FALCON. He admits it!

COLONEL. Unblushingly!

SYM. Of course I do.

FALCON. Roses are not given without a motive, sir.

SYM. Well, then, go and ask the women what the motive was.

FALCON. This bravado will not serve your turn, sir. You have been guilty of a gross violation of friendship and honour, and shall answer it.

COLONEL. Yes, sir; gross violation—friendship—honour—answer it!

SYM. Now I tell you what it is, gentlemen, I'm not a going to be bullied on my own freehold property—if I only had a lease of the place I wouldn't stand it! What do you two maniacs want?

COLONEL. } Satisfaction!

FALCON. }

SYM. Well, I like that—you bring your wives and your little Lou here; they scour my plantations, like female Cossacks—pilfer my roses, and thrust them into my button holes, and now you ask for satisfaction; damme, I'll go in for damages.

FALCON. Well, after all this bluster, sir, I presume you are prepared to fight?

SYM. Just like your presumption, sir; I'm prepared for nothing of the sort. (*aside*) I'm prepared to run away, if I see an opening.

COLONEL. Come sir, enough of this.

SYM. Quite enough—rather too much; let's have no more of it.

FALCON. You don't escape me thus, sir.

COLONEL. Nor me, I promise you.

SYM. Now I tell you what it is; if I work myself into a passion, if I give way to the stupendous and ungovernable frenzy of anger, if I open the floodgates of my temper, and set free the resistless torrent of my overwhelming fury, if in short, you put my all-round collar up, I shall pulverize the pair of you! (*FALCON and COLONEL laugh disdainfully*) Oh, you will have it then, you've done it now; I'm only a little one I know, who cares; if I don't demolish—crush—spifficate—annihilate, and sweep you both from the face of the earth, I—I wish I may be married; there. (*takes off coat*) It's no use your attempting to run away.

FALCON. If you've no objection, we'll fight like gentlemen, not like costermongers.

SYM. Oh, I've frightened you, have I? I thought I should stop your blustering; but as I am strong, I can be merciful.

FALCON. The man's mad!

COLONEL. Raving!

SYM. What! my clemency disdained? then away with it, Colonel; in consequence of the excessive disproportion of your years—I mean nothing offensive—years, not ears, I may forgive you.

COLONEL. Bah!

SYM. (*to FALCON*) But for you, sir, I defy you to mortal British combat; weapons, these! (*holding out fists*) time this, and mind what I say before hand, sir. (*shaking packet of letters in his face*) The polishing you will receive!

FALCON. What do I see? "Letters from Violet!"

COLONEL. (*aside*) Mine! by heaven! The miscreant has broken open my desk!

FALCON. Give up those letters, sir.

SYM. Never, with life.

FALCON. Your life I'll have have then, if I blow you into a thousand fragments! I will have those letters. Colonel, fetch the pistols.

Enter ISABELLA and VIOLET, L. 2 E., down terrace.

COLONEL. (*aside*) I must shoot him, or——

ISABEL. Pistols! (*COLONEL and FALCON, turn away from their wives*)

SYM. Yes, ladies! you have succeeded in fulfilling the mission of women; you have brought with you confusion, mischief, discord, ruin and bloodshed! I am the victim of two wives, belonging to my friends; of two roses belonging to myself; and of one little Lou, belonging to no one in particular.

ISABEL. Oh, nonsense! (*to VIOLET*) May I tell?

VIOLET. Oh, yes, and I?

ISABEL. Certainly! (*goes to COLONEL*)

COLONEL. (*turns away*) Hussey!

ISABEL. Come here, Clarence, come here I say, directly. (*takes him up*)

VIOLET. Falcon, dear.

FALCON. Traitress!

VIOLET. One word only. (*takes him up*)

SYM. (*aside*) What are they up to now? the concoction of some other diabolical plot, I wager. I shan't stay here to be shot; a favourable opportunity now offers for a run, and so here goes. (*running off, L. 1 E., meets LOUISA*) Oh, here's little Loo again!

LOUISA. Dear me, Mr. Symmetry, where are you going in such a hurry?

FALCON. (*aside to VIOLET*) Oh, is that all? (*aloud to SYM.*) Stop, sir, we haven't quite done with you yet. Colonel, a word. (*whispers COLONEL who makes signs of assent*) These wretched women have made a full confession.

SYM. Oh, have they?

FALCON. And there are two courses open to you; you will have either to exchange shots with Colonel Clarence and myself, or else——

COLONEL. Yes, sir, or else——

SYM. Well, out with it, what else?

FALCON. You will marry.

SYM. What! Perhaps you'll be good enough to go and fetch the pistols.

VIOLET. You had better marry, sir.

ISABEL. Consider, cousin, it's a painful thing to be shot.

SYM. Get away, both of you! shoot me and bury me in the stable—the women never go there.

FALCON. Go and fetch the pistols, Colonel.

Exit COLONEL, R. 1 E.

SYM. Well; but stop a minute, suppose, I say I'll mar—ry—I can't get the word out—who the deuce *am* I to marry?

FALCON. What do you say to little Loo?

SYM. Oh, little Loo, again! (*aside*) An idea! I know she won't marry, so I can get out of it that way. (*aloud*) Now, if I'm refused, it's the same thing, of course?

FALCON. Of course!

SYM. (C.) Very well. (*to LOUISA, L. C.*) Now, miss, you see the fix I'm in, and if——(*turning away*) No, I'll do it by post.

FALCON. Won't do.

SYM. Won't it? well then, miss—(*turns away*) No, I'm hanged if I know how to go to work, and there's an end of it.

FALCON. You must kneel down.

VIOLET. Certainly.

ISABEL. That's the position.

SYM. Go along with you, I shan't!

FALCON. Very good, the pistols will soon be here.

SYM. (*aside*) It's no use kicking, they're too many for me, so here goes. (*kneels*) Here's a position for the head of the house of Symmetry. (*aloud*) Now, miss, driven to desperation, and forced by an inconceivable species of persecution into this painful position. I say, let's go on to the grass, these stones are so precious sharp!

FALCON. It'll do very well, only be sharp yourself.

SYM. You see before you, miss, an orphan, and a man of independent property; the victim of an act of ruffianism, from which there is no escape, but by the perpetration of this act of idiocy; under these circumstances, miss, I have to make you an offer of my hand; either of 'em, right or left, I don't care which, what do you say? be quick please.

LOUISA. Well, sir, considering there's very little of you, and not fearing I shall ever love you too violently——

SYM. (*rising*) You see, she refuses.

LOUISA. But more particularly, to save you from being shot, I consent.

Re-enter COLONEL, R. 1. E. with pistols.

SYM. Eh! catch me somebody; (*falls into FALCON's arms*) but no—I won't have it, little Loo's gone crazy; I will not, I—(*turning R., meets COLONEL, who offers pistols*) but you don't know what she'll do to me; she told me herself. (*goes to LOUISA, sternly*) Woman! do you know what you're doing?

LOUISA. Perfectly; I am singular in my notions, and maybe overstepping the bounds of prudence and maidenly propriety; but it is to save a worthy man from an aimless and joyless existence, to which a false prejudice is condemning him.

SYM. False prejudice?

LOUISA. Yes, sir; the defamers of women are generally either fools or libertines; depend upon it, the highest honour of a man's home, the purest part of a man's possessions, the highest lustre of a man's life is, the love of a true and honest woman.

FALCON. And now permit me to observe, that this proceeding was a necessity on Mr. Symmetry's part, for in the event of his remaining unmarried beyond this week, all his property would be forfeited to——

SYM. Oh, never mind her name!

FALCON. (*taking LOUISA's hand*) To this lady, Miss Louisa Dudley.

ALL. What!

SYM. Little Loo, Miss Dudley!

FALCON. Yes, by his uncle's will. It was a bit of deception on my part, Sym, to bring her here, but you will understand and appreciate my intention.

LOUISA. Oh, is it so? no man but a malicious or a foolish one would make such a will, therefore, Mr. Symmetry, I release you from your engagement.

ALL. No, no, no!

LOUISA. And rest assured you shall remain in full possession of your property.

SYM. What, a woman, and so magnanimous! then I say no, no, no, too. (*takes LOUISA's hand and comes forward*) Don't you think I'm right? (*to audience*) Never mind, don't answer—I'll risk it! and you'll shortly see or hear of me in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square, in company with "Little Loo," whose bonnet on that occasion, will be decorated with Orange Blossoms.

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ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

*First produced at the Royal Strand Theatre,
(under the management of Mr. Swanborough, Sen.,)
Thursday, February 20, 1862.*

Characters.

COLONEL CLARENCE	Mr. RAY.
MR. FALCON HOPE.....	Mr. BELFORD.
MR. SEPTIMUS SYMMETRY	Mr. CLARKE.
VIOLET HOPE (<i>Wife to Hope</i>)	Miss K. CARSON.
ISABELLA CLARENCE (<i>Wife to the Colonel</i>)	Miss BUFTON.
LOUISA	Miss F. JOSEPHS.

SCENE—SYMMETRY'S GARDEN.

TIME—THE PRESENT.

Costumes—MODERN.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

SCENE.—*Garden attached to Symmetry's House ; Summer House, R. 2 E. ; door and window practicable ; Shrubbery, L. C. ; Terrace, L. 2 E., practicable ; garden chairs placed about stage.*

SYMMETRY *discovered sitting on rail of garden chain, &c., his feet in the seat, a letter in his hand.*

Gen. Rev. 24 Fe 47, Special

SYM. (*coming down*) Upon my word, credit, honour, and reputation ! this is too bad ! this perpetual and preposterous persecution of the free men of Great Britain by the unblushing women of those three kingdoms, passes all bearing and beggars all belief. Here's poor Falcon Hope fallen a victim to that designing coquette Violet Fane ; not but that he brought the mischief on his own fool's head—he was always cheying the girls about—but it is positively a frightful state of things, and a stand must be made against it ; these brigands in crinoline and bandoline must be put down, and I must go into Parliament to do it, or hang me if I shan't have some woman coming down to marry me next ! Surely some law can be brought to work, to check this monstrous and merciless marauding, upon the hearths and hearts of helpless British bachelors ; but laws generally are in a queer state, the laws of society are clearly out of joint, the laws of nations are simply preposterous, and it's not clear to me, that the laws of Nature don't want looking into. Still I've done my best to steer clear of the soft sex myself—soft ! I never saw anything soft in the sex ; precious clear-headed, sharp-sighted bandits I've found 'em all. Still, I left London, buried myself in the country, and picked my neighbours ; there isn't a pretty girl in the village—in fact, all the women squint, except three, who're blind and can't, so I naturally thought I should be allowed to exist in a comparative state of safety ; and yet this week has annihilated all my hopes, not only has that unutterable imbecile of a Clarence taken a house nearly next door, with that sky-larking cousin of mine, his wife, but now, by way of piling up the agony, I receive this impertinent and cold-blooded epistle. Let me see it once more. (*reads*) “ Dear Sym,—You are aware of my having

become the happiest dog in existence, by the fact of winning my darling Violet." Poor devil! "We have just returned from Paris, and before settling down to work, I have determined to spend a few days with my old friend Symmetry, to whom I long to introduce my dear little wife. Expect us to-morrow. Yours always, Falcon Hope. P.S. I shall bring little Loo with me, as I know she will be as welcome as myself." Little Loo! who's little Loo? it can't be a —no, his calamity has not befallen him long enough for that! then who the deuce is little Loo? If I don't play my cards pretty cleverly, they'll loo me among 'em! Well, if things come to the worst I can emigrate; I should be safe in some Ojibbeway settlement, and that's what I shall have to do.—That villanous codicil! Ahem!

Enter ISABELLA CLARENCE, R. 1 E.

ISABEL. Well, here I am, cousin Septimus!

SYM. Yes, here you are—(*aside*) as we said at school; "*bella horrida bella*," (*aloud*)—and you're not the only misfortune that's to befall me to-day.

ISABEL. Gallant as ever; what now?

SYM. Just run your eye over my wretched face, and the other over that horrid dispatch.

ISABEL. As that would involve an absolute squint, cousin, I shall devote both my eyes to the letter, with your permission. (*reads*)

SYM. (*aside*) I wonder where all this is to end; however, it's rather premature to speculate upon that—it's only just begun.

ISABEL. Why this is absolutely delightful, Septimus.

SYM. Is it?

ISABEL. Poor Falcon Hope! how glad I shall be to see him again; you know he was somewhat smitten with me once.

SYM. Was he? I'm not surprised; he seems fool enough for anything.

ISABEL. Thank you. But whom did he marry? he calls her Violet; what was her other name?

SYM. Fane.

ISABEL. Indeed! why this is better and better; oh! what a delicious meeting; why you must know that my dear old Colonel proposed to her, before he saw me.

SYM. He seems rather partial to ladies, young enough to be his daughters; as some ladies I have heard of, take fancies to men old enough to be their grandfathers.

ISABEL. Very well aimed, cousin, but it misses the mark; bless you, you can't put me out of conceit with my dear old husband; not that he's an hour older than I approve of, for to tell you a very sober truth, Septimus, I admire gray hair, and were I free to-morrow, would rather marry a man of fifty, than one of twenty.

SYM. Well, I can only reply, that you're a woman, and there's no understanding any one of the sex; all I know is, the dear Colonel's a precious old ape.

ISABEL. Cousin!

SYM. And tries to make love to every girl he meets.

ISABEL. He is welcome to do so if it amuses him. It's no use, Septimus, you can't put me out of temper. Now do you know what I've made up my mind to do?

SYM. That's good! No ma'am; what you've made up that very small parcel you call your mind for, I do not know.

ISABEL. Well, I've made up my mind to marry you.

SYM. The deuce you have! are you going to assassinate your other husband?

ISABEL. Not yet.

SYM. Well, we can't have any bigamy, so how are you going to do it?

ISABEL. You foolish fellow, you don't suppose I'm going to marry you myself; I mean I'll marry you to some one else.

SYM. Will you? You're very kind I'm sure.

ISABEL. Yes! depend upon it; I shall see you married before long.

SYM. You may see me hanged; it's much more likely—in fact it's not improbable that I shall hang myself, if this persecution is to go on.

ISABEL. And pray in default of wife and family, may I take the liberty of asking, to whom you intend to leave all your money?

SYM. I shall endow a college for decayed bachelors—for those heroes who have fought the good fight and come off victorious. Stop a moment, there's one legacy I mean to leave, and that's to a lady.

ISABEL. A lady! you leave a legacy to a lady?

SYM. Yes! to the only woman I really respect on earth.

ISABEL. How complimentary you are, cousin.

SYM. Am I? I beg your pardon, I didn't intend it. But it is a debt of gratitude I am bound to discharge. I was once—I presume in a fit of temporary insanity—rash enough to propose to that lady.

ISABEL. Good gracious! and she?

SYM. The blessings of a grateful heart upon her, she refused me! I feel the heavy amount of obligation I owe her, and shall feebly attempt to discharge it, by leaving her a thousand pounds.

ISABEL. Oh, cousin! why didn't you ask me, I'd have refused you for five hundred?

SYM. Then you'd have done it very reasonably, that's all I have to say; but I say, are you not wasting your time here? you must have a great deal to do at home.

ISABEL. Oh, bless you, no! Clarence and I intended spending

the day with you; (SYM. *groans*) but, of course, as you have ladies coming, you must have a lady to entertain them; therefore, while they remain, I shall oblige you by taking up my abode here altogether.

SYM. (*gives a slight scream*) What! do you mean to tell me that I am to be shut up for a *week*, in the same house with two married women and one little Loo?

ISABEL. Exactly! unless we can induce them to stay a *fort-night*!

SYM. Then I had better send for a keeper and a straight waistcoat at once, that's all.

ISABEL. By-the-bye, who *is* little Loo?

SYM. Oh, what do I know or care about little Loo! I only hope they'll *lose* her on the road.

ISABEL. You are full of wit and humanity, cousin; but here comes my lord and master, so I'll take myself off. (*crosses, L*)

SYM. I can't blame him for coming, when he affects so pleasant a diversion in my favour; and when he has succeeded in the desirable manœuvre of taking *you* off, I trust that some providential interference will take *him* off too.

ISABEL. I shall take the liberty, in return for that highly complimentary remark, of superintending the preparation of the best bed rooms in the house for your visitors—no thanks—and sans adieu!—for I shall see that agreeable face of yours again very shortly. *Exit up terrace, L. 2 E.*

SYM. Shall you? I think it doubtful. Now to be bored by Clarence and his twaddle—for next to being talked to *by* a woman, the most objectionable thing is being talked to *about* women, and he can talk of nothing else—ha! an idea! Surely, from what Isabel told me about the previous attachments between these two couples, I can create some confusion among 'em, and punish these men for forcing their wives upon me. I shall be on the look out.

Enter COLONEL CLARENCE, R. 1 E.

COLONEL. I say, Symmetry, I'll swear I saw the skirt of a petticoat vanish past the shrubbery. Are you stealing a march upon us after all, eh?

SYM. You did see a petticoat, Colonel, and one you ought to know and tremble at. It was your wife.

COLONEL. Oh, was it? (*aside*) And she ran away as I approached? I've often had my suspicions of this woman-hater. I must keep an eye on him. (*aloud*) Well, my boy, any news?

SYM. Yes, as disastrous news as need be. I've got some women coming to see me.

COLONEL. Women? Electric sound!

SYM. Galvanic shock!

COLONEL. Are they young—pretty?

SYM. You ought to be the best judge of that, as one of them was an old flame of yours.

COLONEL. Ah! (*aside*) This is exciting.

SYM. I'm told so—or perhaps it was her mother.

COLONEL. Sir!

SYM. Well, how can I tell? This, is a young woman, once known as Violet Fane.

COLONEL. Violet Fane! (*aside*) Meet her again? (*aloud*) Mr. Symmetry, you have broken the sealed tomb of the past.

SYM. Have I? Is there anything in it?

COLONEL. Yes, sir—crushed affections, blighted hopes, and bitter memories. That young person, sir, once rejected this hand—declined this person—renounced this heart.

SYM. No—did she, though?

COLONEL. Symmetry, I am not quite certain that I ought to meet that young person.

SYM. Well, luckily for you, it's optional whether you do or not. I wish I could say the same. I should certainly advise you to go home at once, and take your wife with you.

COLONEL. No—that would be cowardly, despicable. I will brave destiny and see her.

SYM. I say, just allow me to observe that I don't see what destiny you have to brave, in connexion with Mrs. Hope. I believe you have formed a matrimonial alliance with another lady, and I, sir, as the cousin of that lady, cannot permit—Pshaw!—What do I care about it? Do as you like—shoot the husband—marry the widow—get hanged for murder, or transported for bigamy. What the deuce is it to me?

COLONEL. This is strange language, Mr. Symmetry.

SYM. Well, then, don't compel me to ruffle my serene temper about a woman. See! you've brought one upon us!

Enter ISABEL from terrace, L. 2 E.

ISABEL. Oh! 'cousin, they are coming; I saw them drive up to the gate, and I saw little Loo, and she's the queerest looking thing! I told Charles to send them at once into the garden—isn't it delightful, my dear Clarence? Of course you know all about it?

COLONEL. Yes, my dear, yes. (*aside to SYM.*) It will not be necessary, Mr. Symmetry, to mention any portion of our recent conversation to Mrs. Clarence.

SYM. (*to him*) Don't be alarmed. (*aside*) I'll set 'em all by the ears, if I can. (*aloud*) Why didn't you let 'em stay in the house; the ladies might like to go to bed perhaps.

ISABEL. Not they—with such a fascinating host; see, here they come!

SYM. Oh! I'm not going to look fascinating; they shan't

be forming any idea of my personal attractions. (*tumbles his hair, &c.*)

ISABEL. For goodness sake, cousin!

Enter FALCON HOPE, VIOLET, and LOUISA, down terrace, L. 2 E., in travelling costumes.

FALCON. Ah, Symmetry, my dear fellow!

SYM. I'm very glad to see you, (*aside to him*) but why the plague couldn't you come alone?

FALCON. (*aside to him*) The old perverted taste, eh? found no girl agreeable yet. (*aloud*) Allow me to introduce my wife to you—Violet, my love, Mr. Symmetry.

VIOLET. (*aside*) Symmetry itself! What a fright!

FALCON. I have another friend here, Symmetry, my cousin Loo; Louisa, come here and be introduced, will you?

LOUISA. Yes, if you like—it isn't of any great consequence.

SYM. (*aside*) Sensible girl that!

FALCON. You have friends here too, Symmetry; pray make us acquainted? (*seeing ISABEL, R.*) What, Miss Brandon!

VIOLET. (L. C.) What, you know this lady, Falcon?

FALCON. No—yes—that is—(*confused.*)

SYM. This is not Miss Brandon, but the wife of that gentleman, Colonel Clarence.

VIOLET. (*starts, seeing the COLONEL, R. C., for the first time*) Colonel Clarence!

FALCON. You know this gentleman, Violet?

VIOLET. (*confused*) No—yes—that is—(*aside*) how exceedingly awkward!

FALCON. (*uneasily*) Ahem! (*gaily*) Oh, well; old friends—so much the better; make the visit the more agreeable for my part. I was once fortunate enough to be acquainted with Miss Brandon, but it was a mere flying acquaintance.

ISABEL. Which Mrs. Clarence will be delighted to extend, Mr. Hope. (*they shake hands*)

COLONEL. (*aside*) Ahem! I once (*aloud*) also had the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Miss Fane. (*crosses to her*)

VIOLET. Which Mrs. Hope is charmed to renew, colonel.

FALCON. (*aside*) Ahem! (*a general restraint is visible.*)

SYM. (*aside*) It begins beautifully; the men are clearly out of temper, and the women seem disposed to keep them there.

ISABEL. (*aside*) I must take an opportunity of seeing Violet Hope alone.

VIOLET. (*aside*) I must manage to see Mrs. Clarence privately.

SYM. (*aside*) I'll be hanged if I can think of anything to say, but I must go in for something. (*aloud*) This isn't such an ugly den, is it?

FALCON. Delightful ! }
 VIOLET. Delicious ! } (*looking round*)

LOUISA. (L.) Much too nice a den for such a creature as a man.

FALCON. Louisa !

VIOLET. For shame !

SYM. (*aside*) That's a most extraordinary young female—I begin to take quite an interest in her.

VIOLET. You appear to be very fond of flowers, Mr. Symmetry.

SYM. Yes, ma'am,—of all but orange blossoms.

FALCON. Never mind him, Violet—he's quite incurable ; what with Symmetry's denunciations of women, and little Loo's onslaughts upon men, we may expect some fun. But come, Sym, show us round the grounds—the ladies will join us.

SYM. (*aside to him, pulling his coat*) No, no ; confound you, be quiet.

ISABEL. I think you must excuse us at present—these ladies may have some change to make in their dress. What say you, madam ? (*crosses to VIOLET*)

VIOLET. I would rather defer the pleasure until by-and-bye.

SYM. (*to FALCON*) Come along at once ; they'll change their minds in half a minute.

VIOLET. We shall not be long, Falcon.

SYM. Oh, pray don't hurry.

ISABEL. This way, ladies.

Exeunt ISABEL, VIOLET, and LOUISA, *up terrace*, L. 2 E.

SYM. (C.) That's quite a relief, isn't it ?

FALCON. (L.) Relief, you reprobate !

COLONEL. (R.) The sun seems entirely extinguished !

SYM. Oh, never mind the sun, so that the daughters are extinguished.

FALCON. I say Sym, you've hit upon a nice North American Indian style of dressing your hair.

SYM. Yes, I may as well get into their ways at once ; I shall be among 'em soon I fancy.

FALCON. What may you mean by that ?

SYM. Well, I may as well tell you all about it, altho' I don't much like telling secrets to married men ; however, I'll risk it. You may have remarked that I have usually a good flow of spirits ? (*sits, C.*)

FALCON. Certainly. (*seated, L. C.*)

COLONEL. Always cheerful. (*seated, R.*)

SYM. All assumed ; there is a canker, gentlemen, at my heart's core.

FALCON. What ?

COLONEL. Where ?

SYM. Fact—tell you all about it. You know that old Guy Fawkes of an uncle of mine, who left me all his property ?

FALCON. Certainly ; my father made the will.

SYM. He did, and be hanged to him ! Do you happen to know the fiendish codicil he attached to that will ?

FALCON. (*aside*) Perfectly. (*aloud*) My dear Sym, how should I ?

SYM. Well, the human mind is scarcely capable of conceiving such cold-blooded inhumanity ; he actually tacked this condition to his bequest—that if I did not marry before I was thirty-five years of age, nearly the whole of the property goes to another person.

COLONEL. Awkward.

FALCON. (*aloud*) And who is the fortunate recipient, in case you don't marry ?

SYM. Why, sir—to culminate his diabolical ingenuity—a woman, sir—actually a woman—a certain Miss Dudley, whom I never saw !

FALCON. And is Miss Dudley aware of this state of things ?

SYM. No—she is to be kept in the dark till the time arrives.

FALCON. And how old are you now, pray ?

SYM. Who—I—how old ? Oh ! rising thirty-four.

FALCON. Will you swear you are *not* thirty-five next week ?

SYM. Certainly not—I'll swear *I am*.

FALCON. (*aside*) I know that. (*aloud*) And what do you purpose doing—marrying ?

SYM. Mar—— Don't be offensive, sir !

COLONEL. Then, what the deuce do you mean to do ?

SYM. Why, if there is any way of circumventing this female Dudley——

FALCON. Don't imagine it ; my father is too careful to have left any loophole, and depend upon it, he will see the matter properly carried out, for his own reputation's sake.

SYM. Then I shall go and join a tribe of Chocktaw Indians, get tattooed, and live comfortably ; but don't let's talk any more about it—we've got the week before us, and we'll amuse ourselves. (*aside*) I shall begin by making you two comfortable.

COLONEL. Marry my young friend—marry, by all means.

SYM. Oh!—you've always some sensible advice to give ; but even if I were maniac enough to entertain the idea, how could I be sure of getting the right wife. Now here's a case in point. My friend Hope, here, you know, was desperately in love with Isabel——

COLONEL. What, sir ?

FALCON. (*aside to SYM.*) Hold your confounded tongue—do !

SYM. Oh, dear yes, Colonel, didn't you know that ? it was the merest chance in the world that *you* got her—I know she was extravagantly in love with Hope.

FALCON. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Are you crazy ?

COLONEL. This, I presume, sir, was the "flying acquaintance" you had with Miss Brandon?

FALCON. My dear Colonel, this is an egregious error on our friend's part. I certainly did meet Miss Brandon, and might have been dazzled for the moment—but only for the moment, believe me.

COLONEL. This is a delicate subject, and I hardly know how to treat it.

FALCON. Treat it as it deserves, Colonel—it is mere nonsense, be assured. Any partiality I may have felt for Miss Brandon has long since been merged in my devotion to my wife.

COLONEL. As a man of honour, sir, I am bound to believe you. (*aside*) I shall keep my eye upon you, notwithstanding.

SYM. Yes, that's all very well, but there's another case in point—the Colonel, here, ought by right to have married Miss Fane.

FALCON. Sir!

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Can't you keep your fool's tongue quiet?

SYM. Bless you, yes—didn't you know that, my dear Hope? they were mad after each other.

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) Confound you! be still, will you?

FALCON. This, I presume, Colonel, was the "slight acquaintance" you spoke of?

COLONEL. The fact is, Mr. Hope—I once—that is to say--

SYM. Twice, perhaps—come, no shuffling—speak out.

COLONEL. (*aside to SYMMETRY*) I'll assassinate you, you booby!

FALCON. (*laughingly*) Well, never mind—Symmetry has exposed us both, let it pass—we are matched to our liking at last. (*aside*) I'll not lose sight of you, my gay Colonel.

SYM. Well, **now** that I have put you on a friendly footing, and already demonstrated to you that you have each of you married the wrong woman, let us go and look round the property.

FALCON. By all means. (*aside*) I can't think what on earth could have possessed Violet to take any notice of that stick of a Colonel.

COLONEL. (*aside*) What could Isabel have seen in that puppy, I wonder.

SYM. (*aside*) I haven't done amiss for a beginning—I see the makings of a very pretty disturbance—I'll keep the game alive—I'll wake 'em up again presently. (*aloud*) This way—you lively husbands!

Exeunt, R. U. E.

Re-enter ISABEL and VIOLET down terrace, L. 2 E.

ISABEL. Believe me, my dear Mrs. Hope, I am delighted, as Mr. Symmetry's cousin, to receive you in his house, and shall do my best to entertain you.

VIOLET. Believe me, my dear madam, I am equally delighted with the fact of becoming your guest.

ISABEL. I intend that you and I shall be very intimate friends.

VIOLET. An intention I shall only be too happy to second.

ISABEL. And to show you how sincere I am, I am about to take the privilege of an old friend thus early, by asking you a favour.

VIOLET. Dear me, how remarkable—do you know, I was about to ask one of you?

ISABEL. No? (*aside*) What can she mean?

VIOLET. No! (*aside*) What can she want?

ISABEL. The fact is— (*aside*) This is a ridiculous position—it isn't likely she ever heard of her husband's attentions to me.

VIOLET. My object— (*aside*) This is extremely embarrassing—of course, she knows nothing of Clarence's attentions to me.

ISABEL. You said you wished to ask a favour—pray speak.

VIOLET. Pray let me have the pleasure of obliging you first.

ISABEL. This will never do—let us be frank—I will set the example. I am perfectly aware that previous to my marriage, Clarence had the good taste to make proposals to you.

VIOLET. You knew it? (*aside*) What a relief!

ISABEL. Yes, and I know something else, of which you may be probably ignorant, namely, that before your marriage, Mr. Hope had the bad taste to do me the same honour.

VIOLET. (*coolly*) I was certainly quite ignorant of that, Mrs. Clarence.

ISABEL. Oh, be very easy, my dear—if I had liked him, I should have married him—as I didn't, I married somebody else. Now, we are both sensible women, and perfectly contented with the husbands we have—is it not so?

VIOLET. On my side—undoubtedly.

ISABEL. (*holding out her hand*) And no worse friends, for having changed partners in the fantastic dance of matrimony—eh?

VIOLET. (*taking her hand*) Oh, no, no, my dear Mrs. Clarence, I was only a little fool for a moment—forgive me, it is a frequent occurrence.

ISABEL. Now, that we understand each other, let us to the business, or rather pleasure of a mutual obligation—will you commence?

VIOLET. No—do you.

ISABEL. Very well—you must promise not to be angry.

VIOLET. Gladly, for I shall have to exact the same promise from you.

ISABEL. That's agreed, then, on either side. Well, you must know that during the trifling intercourse between Mr. Hope and myself—

VIOLET. That is exactly as I should begin—substituting Colonel Clarence.

ISABEL. I was indiscreet enough—

VIOLET. The very word—our stories commence quite harmoniously.

ISABEL. Indiscreet enough to—

VIOLET. Enter into a correspondence; go on.

ISABEL. Not at all, I never wrote the man a line in my life.

VIOLET. Good gracious! then what were you indiscreet enough to do?

ISABEL. I was miserably weak enough to give him my portrait.

VIOLET. Oh! (*aside*) and I daren't say anything about it!

ISABEL. Now, my dear Mrs. Hope, only get me back that stupid portrait, and I will do anything in the wide world for you, in return.

VIOLET. I must be frank, also; I will take up your story at the word "indiscreet." I was indiscreet enough to—

ISABEL. To give Clarence your likeness.

VIOLET. Never; not even a black profile.

ISABEL. Then, what in mercy's name were you indiscreet enough to do?

VIOLET. To write him certain ridiculous, unmeaning letters. Oh! Mrs. Clarence, only get me back those letters—

ISABEL. Ha! ha! your letters for my portrait—a bargain! Now, it's just possible Mr. Hope may have that portrait with him.

VIOLET. Oh, dear no, I am quite sure he couldn't do that.

ISABEL. Bless you, men do those things! Clarence carries one or two about with him wherever he goes; but he knows I am not jealous, so pray don't you be so.

VIOLET. Oh! bless you, not the least in the world. (*aside*) If he has!

ISABEL. Now, look here, I have the privilege of all my dear husband's desks, &c.—I'll tell you what we'll do—can you overlook Mr. Hope's dressing-case and trunks?

VIOLET. I have the keys of everything,

ISABEL. Good, then we'll not lose a moment, you go and search for my portrait, whiles I run home and search for your letters.

VIOLET. Agreed.

ISABEL. And as we may have no other opportunity of a private conversation, we may as well fix upon some signal of success or failure in our search—I shall be in an agony till I know.

VIOLET. And I, in absolute despair!

ISABEL. Let me see, I have it—a red rose shall be the signal of success, a white one of failure.

VIOLET. Agreed; but if I meet Falcon first, and he sees me with a flower, it's in his coat the next moment.

ISABEL. I'm full of ideas this morning, I have another, we'll make my cousin Symmetry our signal post—we will each, when we meet him, present him with a rose, white or red, as it may be.

VIOLET. But he will never receive a flower from a lady.

ISABEL. Bless you, he couldn't in common courtesy refuse one from you, and I'll make him take mine.

VIOLET. So be it, then; had we not better proceed to work at once?

ISABEL. The sooner the better; stay, to guard against contingencies, it will be as well if we succeed to deposit our spoil in the summer house, there no one ever enters it—yon can put the picture in at that little window, as I will the letters; so we can take possession, without suspicion, at any time.

VIOLET. I shall remember, and fortune grant us success!

ISABEL. Amen to that sweet prayer.

Exit, R. 1 E., VIOLET up terrace, L. 2 E.

Re-enter SYMMETRY, R. U. E.

SYM. Thank goodness I've made my escape from those married men! their conversation, to say the least of it, is of a highly objectionable character—in fact, it's hopeless twaddle; they talk nothing but nonsense, and they don't even talk that well. Hilloa! here comes little Loo, the “man-hater,” as Falcon calls her, so much the better.

Enter LOUISA down terrace, L. 2 E.

So, young lady, I've heard your character from the gentlemen.

LOUISA. And I yours from the ladies; they were neither, I believe, worth hearing.

SYM. And you hate men, do you?

LOUISA. As much as you hate women.

SYM. Then, of course, you hate me.

LOUISA. Oh! I can just put up with you; there's not much of you, and what there is, is not of much account.

SYM. (*aside*) Upon my word, this little Loo's quite refreshing. (*aloud*) I suppose you never mean to be married?

LOUISA. Not till a "hot January," as Beatrice says.

SYM. Ah! that would have been a magnificent play if Shakespeare had not spoiled it by making Benedict fool enough to marry Beatrice.

LOUISA. Reverse it, and say if he had not made Beatrice fool enough to marry Benedict.

SYM. Let us accommodate matters by setting them both down as fools together.

LOUISA. Just my opinion.

SYM. (*aside*) I can get on magnificently with little Loo. (*aloud*) Falcon and his wife agree tolerably well, eh?

LOUISA. Indifferently so at present—the orange blossoms haven't faded yet.

SYM. Orange blossoms! Bah! I'd as soon see a woman with spring onions in her bonnet!

LOUISA. Just my opinion.

SYM. We really agree in a most surprising manner. I must know more of you.

LOUISA. You know enough; you'll like me less the more you know of me.

SYM. That's very possible; but do you know you're about the only woman whose visit I have ever approved of.

LOUISA. I am an involuntary visitor—they brought me here. I had no wish to come, be assured.

SYM. I like you all the better for it—that is, mind, I don't mean that I like you at all. (*aside*) Sym, my fine fellow, you'd better pull up. (*aloud*) I mean——

LOUISA. It's very immaterial what. Have you anything more to say?

SYM. Not at present, I think. Oh!—stop—yes—you adhere to that resolution of yours—never marry. If they would compel you, run away, and never be taken alive.

LOUISA. Let me return that invaluable advice; and be assured if ever I should marry, I should do so simply to be revenged on your whole sex, by the torture of that particular man I married.

SYM. Delightful candour!

LOUISA. I'd thwart him—contradict him—plague him—worry him.

SYM. (*aside*) Little Loo's a little devil.

LOUISA. In short, I'd drive him mad—there!

SYM. You wouldn't have very far to drive him; he'd be half way there before he ventured upon you.

LOUISA. I'm afraid you'll think me very free and plain spoken, but it's my nature; if you object to it, say so, and I'll go back to town.

SYM. Object? Bless you, no—you have such correct views

of things in general, and marriage in particular, it's quite delicious, and your sentiments again agree with mine, for if by any unforeseen, and impossible concatenation of diabolical circumstances I should be inveigled into marriage—— You've heard of the wife beatings in that healthy and moral village of London?

LOUISA. To my shame and sorrow, yes.

SYM. Well, they're all trifles to what the woman would get who married me.

LOUISA. I'm sure she would deserve all she received; and now, sir, good morning.

SYM. Good morning, miss; I think we quite understand each other, and we've had a very pleasant and intellectual conversation.

Exit LOUISA up terrace, L. 2 E.

I've quite enjoyed it, upon my word; that little Loo is one of the most sensible girls I ever met with. If all women were like her now, and had the same opinion of mankind, how swimmingly we should all go on together. Now then, this won't do; here's another woman hunting me up—it's Mrs. Hope, and hang me, if she hasn't got one of my choicest white roses in her hand—just like 'em—they can't keep their hands off anything.

Enter VIOLET down terrace, L. 2 E., with a white rose.

VIOLET. (*aside*) I can't find it. I knew he would never carry that trumpery portrait about with him. (*aloud*) Oh, my dear Mr. Symmetry, I was looking for you. You must allow me to present you with this beautiful white rose; you can't refuse to wear it for my sake! (*fastens it to his coat*)

SYM. (*aside*) No, I don't see well how I can, or I would. (*aloud*) I'm sure I'm uncommonly flattered.

VIOLET. Oh, pray don't mention it; and above all, pray don't think of thanking me.

SYM. (*aside*) I should like to blow you up for picking my flowers.

VIOLET. I'm sure you'll excuse my running away——

SYM. Oh, certainly.

VIOLET. As I have left little Loo in your pretty conservatory.

Exit up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. And a pretty conservatory it will be when little Loo comes out of it, I expect. Now, what does this white rose mean? there's some design in it, I'll lay a wager. Eh? what? no! yes! why, damn it! here's another woman bearing down, with another rose. Its my free and easy cousin. Oh, I must get out of this!

Enter ISABELLA, R. 1 E., with red rose and packet of letters.

ISABEL. (*aside*) I've found these precious documents, and I

dare say they were well worth looking for. (*aloud*) Ah, cous—What do I see, a white rose? (*aside*) Then she has failed.

SYM. (*warmly*) Yes, and I see a red rose. Now, I tell you what it is, Cousin Isabel, I know I'm a mild man, I believe I am generally looked upon as a soft man, but if a pack of mischievous females go about my grounds damaging my plants you'll see me in one of the most stupendous passions—you will witness one of the most demoniac outbursts of fury—

ISABEL. Don't get excited, my dear Septimus, but just put this rose in your coat, and compose yourself—you know how I love you.

SYM. Am I to be stuck all over with roses?—if I do, I'm—

ISABEL. Don't be a little ruffian! now just attend to me, if you don't put this rose in your coat directly, sir, I'll sit by your side, and talk to you all the evening.

SYM. (*eagerly*) Give it to me! (*fastens rose in his coat*) Life is still sweet, even under this persecution.

ISABEL. (*aside*) Gracious! if I didn't leave Clarence's desk open. (*aloud*) I think you'll excuse my running away, cousin?

SYM. I'm sure I will—good bye!

ISABEL. Ta, ta, cousin! I declare you look quite handsome, (*he turns away, she slips letters in the window of summer house*) and so good humoured—he! he! he! *Exit R. 1 E.*

SYM. Confound these women! now what is the meaning of all this? first of all, the female Hope brings me a white rose—then the female Clarence brings me a red rose—I suppose little Loo'll bring me something presently—a moss rose, perhaps, or a wreath of orange blossoms, or a stick of rhubarb from the kitchen garden! It's quite clear I'm being victimized. I see no way for it, but to pack up a small portmanteau, steal out of the back door, and “wait for the waggon!” and I'll go and do it. Ah!—catch it, Symmetry, my boy—an idea! and what an idea! beautiful! Now, my rosy beauties, I'll spoil your little game, whatever it is. I'll just give—ah, here's Falcon, that'll do very nicely. I'll begin with him—I'll entangle 'em.

Enter FALCON, R. U. E.

FALCON. Why, Symmetry, what the plague do you mean by running away from your friends in this manner? What have you been about?

SYM. Oh, bless you, I've been making myself agreeable to the ladies.

FALCON. The deuce you have! Well, as you've been so laudably and unusually occupied, I cannot complain.

SYM. Had a chat with little Loo.

FALCON. Sensible girl that !

SYM. I believe you.

FALCON. Rather strong minded, perhaps.

SYM. Well, rather.

FALCON. Now, she'd make you an excellent wife, Sym.

SYM. Yes, I dare say she would, thank you.

FALCON. I have always promised myself to get you a wife.

SYM. You're very kind ; when I want one, I'll drop you a line. Then I've been doing floricultural commissions for the other ladies.

FALCON. And I see they've not forgotten to reward you for your trouble.

SYM. Hush ! You see this red rose ?

FALCON. Clearly ; and a very fine one it is.

SYM. Well—it's for you.

FALCON. For me ! From whom ?

SYM. Never mind that ; you take it, and ask no questions.

FALCON. Oh, nonsense ! I must know who sent it.

SYM. Well, I don't think the party who sent it ought to have sent it, and I ought not to have brought it ; but then a woman can't do as she ought, and I'm such an obliging blockhead.

FALCON. Well, but who is the sender ?

SYM. Oh, if I must tell you. Here—Isabella Clarence.

FALCON. (*taking it, aside*) Isabella, then, has not forgotten me ; but it is too late—my allegiance to Violet is not to be shaken. (*aloud*) I esteem the gift as from an old friend—tell her—no, I'll tell her that myself. (*puts rose in his coat*) Well, that other rose ?

SYM. Oh, that's a secret ;—you want to know a great deal too much at once. Let me give you a piece of wholesome advice : never prick your fingers with the thorns of other people's roses.

FALCON. Oh, I see ; little Loo gave it you.

SYM. Well, she did give it me—rather—in one sense—but she didn't give me this rose ; the fact is, as you are so preciously inquisitive, I had it from Mrs. Hope.

FALCON. Then why couldn't you say so at once ? What harm is there in your wearing a rose given you by my wife ?

SYM. I don't suppose there'd be any particular harm if I wore a wreath of roses ; but it isn't for me.

FALCON. No ! For whom then ?

SYM. Well, you will know. I told you you'd better not ; but if you will, it's not my fault—it's for Colonel Clarence.

FALCON. What, sir !—impossible !

SYM. Oh, you think it quite possible for Mrs. Clarence to send you a rose, but quite impossible for Mrs. Hope to send one to Colonel Clarence ?

FALCON. A different thing, sir, altogether! (*aside*) Can this be true?

SYM. Well, I look upon it as a mere tit for tat arrangement, but you know best; if you say it is impossible, I dare say it is.

FALCON. Pooh, Sym, you're only joking.

SYM. Now just look at me attentively, and tell me candidly, whether I have the appearance of a man who's given to joking.

FALCON. This is not to be borne, sir; if it be so, I know my course; if it be not so, look to yourself.

Exit angrily up terrace, L. 2 E.

SYM. Number one settled. I'll teach 'em how to upset a quiet gentleman's establishment, with their wives, and little Loos, and roses, and orange blossoms, and—ha! here's Clarence.

Enter COLONEL CLARENCE, R. U. E.

COLONEL. Have you seen Isabella, Symmetry?

SYM. Gone home, Colonel.

COLONEL. Oh! she'll soon be back, I suppose?

SYM. I'm afraid so.

COLONEL. That's a very handsome white rose of yours.

SYM. It's no rose of mine.

COLONEL. Indeed!

SYM. Don't make a noise—it's yours. (*gives it*)

COLONEL. Mine! To what lovely creature am I indebted for this precious gift?

SYM. Why, to me, of course.

COLONEL. Psha! Oh, I see, it's from that pretty little girl they call Louisa!

SYM. Go along, you old peacock! that pretty little girl they call Louisa, would be more likely to send you a bunch of stinging nettles.

COLONEL. Well, I must know who sent it, come.

SYM. Oh! very good, just as you please, only you'd better know nothing about it; why, you irresistible old warrior, it's from Violet Hope.

COLONEL. Is it possible! (*aside*) The charming Violet still holds me in her heart. (*puts rose in his coat*) Unhappy woman, her repentance comes too late! (*aloud*) Oh, Symmetry, you don't often find old friendships revived in this tender and graceful manner!

SYM. Not often, only occasionally. I know a very recent case——

COLONEL. Ah!

SYM. Yes, Isabel has just sent Falcon Hope a red rose.

COLONEL. Who? Sent what? Am I to understand——

SYM. Precisely what I said, you'll see it in his button hole.

COLONEL. And if I do, sir, I'll pluck it out, and force it down

his throat; but, let me be calm—let me first ascertain the truth of this; you say my wife has gone home, if you have deceived me, beware! *Exit passionately, R. 1 E.*

SYM. Number two disposed of, and I think the quarrel a very pretty one as it stands; therefore, I shall interfere in it no further. I'll just place myself in a place of observation—Ah! that summer house is the very thing; I shall deposit myself in that private box, and enjoy an uninterrupted view of the entire entertainment. Hillos! here comes one of the play actors! Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, just a going to begin.

(goes into summer house R., and looks from window)

Enter FALCON highly excited, L. 2 E., down terrace.

FALCON. It was all true, I charged the perfidious woman with having had a white rose in her possession, and she could not deny it; but by no threats, or entreaties, or commands, could I make her confess for what purpose she procured it. Now in mind, I have only now to blow out the brains of that rascally old Colonel, and my business here, is at an end. I'm not sure that I ought not to blow Symmetry's brains out too!

SYM. Hillos! come I say!

FALCON. For daring to lend himself to such a piece of base disloyalty! However, first to find this man Clarence.

Exit, R. 2 E.

SYM. I think I've got him up to fever heat and a degree or two over—good! here comes another of the company, the heavy old man.

Enter COLONEL, R. 1 E., in a rage.

COLONEL. True, true! every damned word of it true! The brazen hussey owned to the having a red rose, and when I threatened to annihilate her unless she told me why she gathered it, the baggage laughed in my face, and said it was a secret—A secret! my honour a secret, in the hands of that chattering little villain, Symmetry!

SYM. *(aside)* Now then!

COLONEL. But where is this fellow Hope? I'll shoot him like a dog! and as for Symmetry, I'll horsewhip him within an inch of his life.

SYM. *(aside)* The devil you will!

Enter FALCON, R. U. E.

FALCON. Nowhere to be seen—ha! so, sir, at last!

COLONEL. Well met, sir; I have to demand of you an account of that red rose you wear in your coat.

FALCON. You forestall me, sir; I was about to demand of you an account of that white rose you wear so ostentatiously.

SYM. (*aside*) Go it, York—go it, Lancaster!

COLONEL. And suppose I refuse to render an account, sir.

FALCON. You are aware of the alternative, Colonel Clarence.

COLONEL. I wear Her Majesty's uniform, sir, which is a sufficient answer.

SYM. (*aside*) I must stop this.

Enter LOUISA, L. U. E.

FALCON. Can you furnish the weapon?

COLONEL. If you will use mine.

FALCON. Unquestionably.

COLONEL. Be kind enough to accompany me then.

SYM. (*about to call out, sees LOUISA*) Confound it; here's little Lou, again!

LOUISA. Why, what on earth's the matter?

FALCON. Nothing that concerns you, Louisa—go away.

LOUISA. Indeed I shall not, till I know the meaning of this strange conduct.

COLONEL. My dear young lady, it will be sufficient for you to understand that I am dishonoured by the rose Mr. Hope now wears.

FALCON. And I equally so by that worn by Colonel Clarence.

LOUISA. Oh, if that's the only cause of quarrel, shake hands.

SYM. (*aside*) Bravo, little Lou!

LOUISA. For you are quarrelling about things that don't concern you.

COLONEL. } What!

FALCON. }

LOUISA. I myself saw both those roses given to Mr. Symmetry.

FALCON. I am perfectly aware of that, but they were not for him.

LOUISA. I beg your pardon; I heard Mrs. Hope say, "My dear Mr. Symmetry, you cannot refuse to wear this rose, for my sake;" and Mrs. Clarence said, "Put this rose in your coat and compose yourself—you know how I love you."

(COLONEL and FALCON stare at each other in amazement)

SYM. (*aside*) That little Lou 'll be the death of me.

LOUISA. Now, gentlemen, you can of course do as you please; but if you must fight, you at least know who should be your antagonist.

Exit, L. 1 E.

SYM. (*aside*) I'll strangle that little Lou, if I'm hanged for it.

COLONEL. It appears we have been a trifle too hasty in this matter, Mr. Hope.

FALCON. We have, Colonel; and I, as the younger, frankly ask your pardon.

COLONEL. You are an honourable young man, sir, and I ask yours with all my heart. (*they shake hands*)

FALCON. So this Mr. Symmetry, this woman-hater, has dared to tamper with us in this way.

COLONEL. I have long suspected him ; I believe his expressed antipathy to the sex to be sheer hypocrisy and assumed, merely to cloak the vilest enormities.

SYM. (*aside*) O you do, do you, you scurrilous old imbecile !

FALCON. Our views with regard to him are identical.

COLONEL. I understand you—certainly.

SYM. (*aside*) I don't.

FALCON. The only question is which shall have the first shot at him.

COLONEL. I claim that, by virtue of seniority.

SYM. (*aside*) Oh, you stupid old fool !

FALCON. I think it is rather due to me as a guest.

SYM. (*aside*) Oh, settle it as you please, pray.

COLONEL. I cannot consent to waive my right.

SYM. (*aside*) Perhaps you'd like to come on both at once.

FALCON. Well, let us each go in search of him. Whichever is lucky enough to meet him first shall take precedence.

COLONEL. Agreed ; but we may as well change roses first. (*they do so*) I'll take this path. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

FALCON. And I this. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

SYM. (*comes out with packet of letters in his hand, and sings very softly*)

“Come open your gates, and let me gang free,

For I darena stay longer in Bonny Dundee.”

Well, I think I've done it now ; I've certainly put this handsome foot of mine pretty deeply into it. I must be off ; I should like to tumble across little Loo, though, before I go. I'd—I'd—I'd—what's this packet?—“Letters from Violet.” Why, I found 'em among the tools in the summer house ; she must have been in correspondence with the gardener ! She's a beauty ! but I can't stop to overhaul 'em now, I shall have the Philistines upon me. (*as he is going, L. 1 E. meets FALCON*) Oh !

FALCON. Stop, sir !

SYM. Cau't—violent hurry ! (*as he is about to run off, R. 1 E., meets COLONEL*) Ah !

COLONEL. Stop, sir !

FALCON. Don Juan !

COLONEL. Lovelace !

FALCON. Faublas !

SYM. Go on !—anybody else ?

COLONEL. Hypocrite !

FALCON. Traitor !

COLONEL. Is this your friendship ?

FALCON. Is this your hospitality ?

SYM. I wish to gracious you'd all of you go back to London.

FALCON. This rose was given to you, sir, by my wife.

COLONEL. And this by mine.

SYM. Yes; and I wish both your wives would let my roses alone.

FALCON. He admits it!

COLONEL. Unblushingly!

SYM. Of course I do.

FALCON. Roses are not given without a motive, sir.

SYM. Well, then, go and ask the women what the motive was.

FALCON. This bravado will not serve your turn, sir. You have been guilty of a gross violation of friendship and honour, and shall answer it.

COLONEL. Yes, sir; gross violation—friendship—honour—answer it!

SYM. Now I tell you what it is, gentlemen, I'm not a going to be bullied on my own freehold property—if I only had a lease of the place I wouldn't stand it! What do you two maniacs want?

COLONEL. } Satisfaction!
FALCON. }

SYM. Well, I like that—you bring your wives and your little Lou here; they scour my plantations, like female Cossacks—pilfer my roses, and thrust them into my button holes, and now you ask for satisfaction; damme, I'll go in for damages.

FALCON. Well, after all this bluster, sir, I presume you are prepared to fight?

SYM. Just like your presumption, sir; I'm prepared for nothing of the sort. (*aside*) I'm prepared to run away, if I see an opening.

COLONEL. Come sir, enough of this.

SYM. Quite enough—rather too much; let's have no more of it.

FALCON. You don't escape me thus, sir.

COLONEL. Nor me, I promise you.

SYM. Now I tell you what it is; if I work myself into a passion, if I give way to the stupendous and ungovernable frenzy of anger, if I open the floodgates of my temper, and set free the resistless torrent of my overwhelming fury, if in short, you put my all-round collar up, I shall pulverize the pair of you! (*FALCON and COLONEL laugh disdainfully*) Oh, you will have it then, you've done it now; I'm only a little one I know, who cares; if I don't demolish—crush—spifficate—annihilate, and sweep you both from the face of the earth, I—I wish I may be married; there. (*takes off coat*) It's no use your attempting to run away.

FALCON. If you've no objection, we'll fight like gentlemen, not like costermongers.

SYM. Oh, I've frightened you, have I? I thought I should stop your blustering; but as I am strong, I can be merciful.

FALCON. The man's mad!

COLONEL. Raving!

SYM. What! my clemency disdained? then away with it, Colonel; in consequence of the excessive disproportion of your years—I mean nothing offensive—years, not ears, I may forgive you.

COLONEL. Bah!

SYM. (to FALCON) But for you, sir, I defy you to mortal British combat; weapons, these! (*holding out fists*) time this, and mind what I say before hand, sir. (*shaking packet of letters in his face*) The polishing you will receive!

FALCON. What do I see? "Letters from Violet!"

COLONEL. (*aside*) Mine! by heaven! The miscreant has broken open my desk!

FALCON. Give up those letters, sir.

SYM. Never, with life.

FALCON. Your life I'll have have then, if I blow you into a thousand fragments! I will have those letters. Colonel, fetch the pistols.

Enter ISABELLA and VIOLET, L. 2 E., down terrace.

COLONEL. (*aside*) I must shoot him, or——

ISABEL. Pistols! (COLONEL and FALCON, turn away from their wives)

SYM. Yes, ladies! you have succeeded in fulfilling the mission of women; you have brought with you confusion, mischief, discord, ruin and bloodshed! I am the victim of two wives, belonging to my friends; of two roses belonging to myself; and of one little Lou, belonging to no one in particular.

ISABEL. Oh, nonsense! (to VIOLET) May I tell?

VIOLET. Oh, yes, and I?

ISABEL. Certainly! (*goes to COLONEL*)

COLONEL. (*turns away*) Hussey!

ISABEL. Come here, Clarence, come here I say, directly. (*takes him up*)

VIOLET. Falcon, dear.

FALCON. Traitress!

VIOLET. One word only. (*takes him up*)

SYM. (*aside*) What are they up to now? the concoction of some other diabolical plot, I wager. I shan't stay here to be shot; a favourable opportunity now offers for a run, and so here goes. (*running off, L. 1 E., meets LOUISA*) Oh, here's little Loo again!

LOUISA. Dear me, Mr. Symmetry, where are you going in such a hurry?

FALCON. (*aside to VIOLET*) Oh, is that all? (*aloud to SYM.*) Stop, sir, we haven't quite done with you yet. Colonel, a word. (*whispers COLONEL who makes signs of assent*) These wretched women have made a full confession.

SYM. Oh, have they?

FALCON. And there are two courses open to you; you will have either to exchange shots with Colonel Clarence and myself, or else——

COLONEL. Yes, sir, or else——

SYM. Well, out with it, what else?

FALCON. You will marry.

SYM. What! Perhaps you'll be good enough to go and fetch the pistols.

VIOLET. You had better marry, sir.

ISABEL. Consider, cousin, it's a painful thing to be shot.

SYM. Get away, both of you! shoot me and bury me in the stable—the women never go there.

FALCON. Go and fetch the pistols, Colonel.

Exit COLONEL, R. 1 E.

SYM. Well; but stop a minute, suppose, I say I'll mar—ry —I can't get the word out—who the deuce *am* I to marry?

FALCON. What do you say to little Loo?

SYM. Oh, little Loo, again! (*aside*) An idea! I know she won't marry, so I can get out of it that way. (*aloud*) Now, if I'm refused, it's the same thing, of course?

FALCON. Of course!

SYM. (C.) Very well. (*to LOUISA, L. C.*) Now, miss, you see the fix I'm in, and if——(*turning away*) No, I'll do it by post.

FALCON. Won't do.

SYM. Won't it? well then, miss—(*turns away*) No, I'm hanged if I know how to go to work, and there's an end of it.

FALCON. You must kneel down.

VIOLET. Certainly.

ISABEL. That's the position.

SYM. Go along with you, I shan't!

FALCON. Very good, the pistols will soon be here.

SYM. (*aside*) It's no use kicking, they're too many for me, so here goes. (*kneels*) Here's a position for the head of the house of Symmetry. (*aloud*) Now, miss, driven to desperation, and forced by an inconceivable species of persecution into this painful position. I say, let's go on to the grass, these stones are so precious sharp!

FALCON. It'll do very well, only be sharp yourself.

SYM. You see before you, miss, an orphan, and a man of independent property; the victim of an act of ruffianism, from which there is no escape, but by the perpetration of this act of idiocy; under these circumstances, miss, I have to make you an offer of my hand; either of 'em, right or left, I don't care which. what do you say? be quick please.

LOUISA. Well, sir, considering there's very little of you, and not fearing I shall ever love you too violently——

SYM. (*rising*) You see, she refuses.

LOUISA. But more particularly, to save you from being shot, I consent.

Re-enter COLONEL, R. 1. E. with pistols.

SYM. Eh! catch me somebody; (*falls into FALCON's arms*) but no—I won't have it, little Loo's gone crazy; I will not, I—(*turning R., meets COLONEL, who offers pistols*) but you don't know what she'll do to me; she told me herself. (*goes to LOUISA, sternly*) Woman! do you know what you're doing?

LOUISA. Perfectly; I am singular in my notions, and maybe overstepping the bounds of prudence and maidenly propriety; but it is to save a worthy man from an aimless and joyless existence, to which a false prejudice is condemning him.

SYM. False prejudice?

LOUISA. Yes, sir; the defamers of women are generally either fools or libertines; depend upon it, the highest honour of a man's home, the purest part of a man's possessions, the highest lustre of a man's life is, the love of a true and honest woman.

FALCON. And now permit me to observe, that this proceeding was a necessity on Mr. Symmetry's part, for in the event of his remaining unmarried beyond this week, all his property would be forfeited to——

SYM. Oh, never mind her name!

FALCON. (*taking LOUISA's hand*) To this lady, Miss Louisa Dudley.

ALL. What!

SYM. Little Loo, Miss Dudley!

FALCON. Yes, by his uncle's will. It was a bit of deception on my part, Sym, to bring her here, but you will understand and appreciate my intention.

LOUISA. Oh, is it so? no man but a malicious or a foolish one would make such a will, therefore, Mr. Symmetry, I release you from your engagement.

ALL. No, no, no!

LOUISA. And rest assured you shall remain in full possession of your property.

SYM. What, a woman, and so magnanimous! then I say no, no, no, too. (*takes LOUISA's hand and comes forward*) Don't you think I'm right? (*to audience*) Never mind, don't answer—I'll risk it! and you'll shortly see or hear of me in the neighbourhood of Hanover Square, in company with "Little Loo," whose bonnet on that occasion, will be decorated with Orange Blossoms.

COLONEL. ISABELLA. SYMMETRY. LOUISA. FALCON. VIOLET.
R. L.

Curtain.

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Bare-faced Impostors, farce, p. v.	5	0	Fair Helen, opera, p. v.	7	6
Battle of Hexham, p. v.	3	6	Fair Rosamond's Bower, burl., p. v.	10	0
Beauty and Beast [Keating] p. v.	5	0	Fairyland, fairy play, p. v.	7	6
Beggars' Opera, vocal score	3	6	Farmer, opera, p. v.	2	6
Black Eyed Susan, drama, full score	5	0	Father and Son, drama, 5 band pts	5	0
Black Eye'd Susan, drama dedi- cated to R. W. Ettison, p. v.	5	0	Field of Cloth of Gold, burl., p. v.	20	0
Black Eyed Susan, burl. p. v.	20	0	Field of Forty Footsteps, 7 b. pts	7	6
Ditto, 9 band parts	20	0	Flying Dutchman, 7 band parts	15	0
Blind Boy, 4 band parts	5	0	Fortunio, extrav., 10 band parts	15	0
Blue Beard, drama, p. v.	5	0	Forty Thieves, drama (Sheridan) p. v.	5	0
Blue Beard Repaired, p. v.	30	0	Foundling of the Forest, p. v.	3	6
Blue Beard [Byron's] burl. p. v.	15	0	Ditto, 7 band parts	5	0
Ditto, 6 band parts	10	0	Fra Diavola, burl., p. v.	20	0
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Castle of Andalusia, p. v. & 3 b. pts	5	0	Ditto, 10 band parts	7	6
Castle Spectre, opera, p. v.	2	6	Hamlet, grave-digger's song & acc.	1	0
Cataract of Ganges, dra., 6 b. parts	10	0	Haunted Mill, p. v.	3	6
Charles XII, instrumental of song, "Rise, Gentle Moon"	3	6	Haunted Tower, comic opera, p. v.	5	0
Children in the Wood, opera, p. v.	2	6	He would be an Actor, full score	2	6
Ching Chang Fou, burl. p. v.	10	0	Highland Lassie Ballet, 3 band pts.	3	0
Cinderella [Byron] burl. 8 band pts	20	0	High Life below Stairs, song, "All in a Livery"	1	0
Cinderella [Byron] burl. p. v.	20	0	House that Jack Built, full score	10	0
Cinderella [Miss Keating] burl. p. v.	5	0	Hunter of the Alps, p. v.	3	6
Cinderella, opera, p. v.	7	6	Ill-treated Trovatore, p. v.	15	0
Colleen Bawn, drama, 8 band parts	10	0	Ditto, 9 band parts	15	0
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			Ditto, 8 band parts	10	0

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Jack Robinson and his Monkey, 6 band parts	5	0	Of Age to-morrow, opera	3	6
Jack Sheppard (songs in).....	1	0	Of Noble Birth, p. v.	7	6
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Joan of Arc, drama, 4 band parts..	5	0	Pas de Fascination, 8 band parts ...	5	6
John of Paris	10	0	Patient Penelope, p. v.	10	0
Kenilworth, burl. p. v.	20	0	Perdita, burl. p. v.	20	0
King Alfred and the cakes, burl. p. v.	3	0	Pills of Wisdom, p. v.	10	0
Lady Godiva, vocal, and 13 band pts.	20	0	Pirates, opera, p. v.	5	0
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Ditto, 5 band parts	10	0	Prince Nicey Nosey, p. v.	7	6
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VICTOR		Mr. PARSELLE.
FREDERICK		Mr. MOWBRAY.
OFFICER <i>of the Guard</i>	Mr. EDGE.	
TWO SERVANTS, GUARDS, &c.		
ROSALIE DE VALMONT	Miss M. SIMPSON.	
MARIE DELACOUR	Miss TURTLE.	

PERIOD—LOUIS XIII.

COSTUMES.

COUNT DELACOUR, ADOLPHE DE VALMONT, VICTOR, FREDERICK, OFFICER, AND TWO GUARDS.—Red jackets trimmed with gold, tight and hanging sleeves, broad sword belts, full short petticoat skirt, brown full trunks trimmed with gold, drab hats with red feathers, white stockings, and black bucket boots, spurs and swords, white collars, ringlet wigs.

TWO SERVANTS.—Buff liveries of the same period.

ROSALIE DE VALMONT.—White satin dress trimmed with gold and scarlet ribbon. *2nd dress.*—Musketeer officer's, the same as the Gentlemen.

MARIE DELACOUR.—Yellow satin, trimmed with silver, low necked.

SISTERLY SERVICE.



SCENE FIRST. — *Apartment in the House of Adolphe de Valmont. (1st Grooves.)*

ADOLPHE *seated at R. table, restlessly beating his foot on the floor,*
ROSALIE *seated L., reading.*

ROSALIE. Patience, Adolphe! you'll craze me with that eternal tap, tap, tap of your boot. Do, for mercy's sake be quiet for five minutes! (ADOLPHE *rises petulantly, and walks about the room*) Dear me! that's a great deal worse! the jingling of those horrid spurs is enough to distract one! Pray did you lose your money at play last night? Are you suffering persecution from your creditors—or has the demon of scorn flashed out of the violet eyes of your saintly Isabelle? In the name of charity, Adolphe, tell me, what is the matter?

ADOLPHE. Oh, nothing very particular—only absolute perdition, and utter despair!

ROSALIE. You *have* been gambling, then?

ADOLPHE. I have not been gambling.

ROSALIE. Fighting, then?

ADOLPHE. Nor fighting. I wish with all my heart I *had* a quarrel with some one! If I could only run some one through, I think I should feel easier.

ROSALIE. Isabelle is unkind, then?

ADOLPHE. Too kind.

ROSALIE. Well, I shall not perplex myself with any more conjectures—tell me at once, sir, what your trouble is, and I'll see if I can help you out of it.

ADOLPHE. Help me—you! Well, in five words, then, I stand a very good chance of losing Isabelle altogether.

ROSALIE. How so?

ADOLPHE. She leaves Paris for the south to-morrow, and

she made me promise, if I wished her ever to call me to mind during her absence, to meet her to-night in the garden as usual.

ROSALIE. Well, I see nothing very near despair yet.

ADOLPHE. As ill luck would have it, that plague, old Delacour, has appointed me to the guard of the Dauphin's apartments, where I must be at the very hour I was to meet Isabelle. If I fail her, she is quite capable of discarding me for ever—if I neglect my duty, Delacour is quite *certain* to have me dismissed the service; so, you see, either way I am ruined past redemption.

ROSALIE. It's a very awkward dilemma, certainly. Cannot Victor supply your place on guard?

ADOLPHE. I went to ask him—but he is under orders to start for Chalons with despatches—and, by the bye, he bade me make his excuses to you, as the suddenness of his departure would prevent his saying farewell in person.

ROSALIE. That is very immaterial—but really I do not see how I can assist you!

ADOLPHE. I never for one moment supposed you could.

ROSALIE. It's quite clear no one can supply your place in the garden—then you must be there yourself, that's equally clear; and that point being settled, the only thing to be arranged is, who will mount guard for you during your absence?

ADOLPHE. Exactly! and that arrangement being an impossibility, it follows that I must either lose Isabelle, or my reputation.

ROSALIE. I have it—but positively your rudeness and unbelief in my powers of invention hardly warrant my assisting you—still, as you are a dear, good brother, sometimes, I will repress my just indignation, and extricate you from your dilemma. Now listen, you can have no proxy in the garden—you must, therefore, have one in the palace.

ADOLPHE. If I only knew where to find one.

ROSALIE. I know a young person, of nearly your own height, not unlike you in features, only incomparably better looking, who has spirit, not to say impudence enough for any frolic, however wild, and who will do anything to accommodate me. Now this person shall take your place.

ADOLPHE. And pray what's his name?

ROSALIE. *Her* name is—Rosalie de Valmont. (*rising*)

ADOLPHE. (R.) You! preposterous!

ROSALIE. (L.) On the contrary, it is a very simple, easy, and natural piece of Sisterly Service. In the first place, I encase myself in your uniform, in which I shall look a great deal better than you do.

ADOLPHE. That's a mere matter of taste, my dear.

ROSALIE. I shall then take my position—wherever it is—keep it, and hold my tongue—whilst you use *yours* to the best advantage you can with Isabelle, in the garden. Your interview over, which I shall stipulate you make as short as love will let you, you hurry to the palace, relieve me, and sweeten the remaining hours of your guard with thoughts of dear remembrance of your mistress, and profound gratitude to your sister.

ADOLPHE. Upon my word, it's not half so absurd as I thought it at first.

ROSALIE. Absurd ! It's the perfection of ingenuity !

ADOLPHE. For on consideration, it is certainly practicable. My post is in the corridor, outside the apartments—you would be alone—no one ever ventures in that part of the palace—and it would be only for an hour or so—I really think it could be done !

ROSALIE. *Could* be done ! it *shall* be done ! You're quite sure Victor will not be on guard ?

ADOLPHE. Quite—he is leagues away from Paris by this time. This idea reflects the highest credit on you, my dear sister.

ROSALIE. But I have no time to waste.

ADOLPHE. Indeed, you have not—in half an hour you must be at your post.

ROSALIE. Come, then, and find me your gayest uniform, and if I disgrace it, shut me up in a nunnery for the rest of my life !

ADOLPHE. I will give you the pass-word, and all necessary directions the last thing—so, march, Captain Rosalie !

ROSALIE. Have with you comrade, and—stay, if you could teach me a harmless oath or two, in case any one touches my dignity.

ADOLPHE. Allow me to remind you, most noble captain, that should any offence be offered you, you will be *armed*.

ROSALIE. True, civilian, I had forgotten that—and if I am compelled to unsheath my sword, my antagonists will soon discover that they have to deal with a gentleman—a soldier, and a De Valmont.

Exeunt L. 1 E.—Clear stage.

SCENE SECOND.—*Corridor of the Palace. Door, R., leading to the Dauphin's Apartments—door, with curtain, L.—lamp suspended—table, C.—chairs, R. and L.*

Enter COUNT DELACOUR *at door, L., followed by* VICTOR *and* FREDERICK.

VICTOR. (R.) Do not imagine for a moment, Count, that I

am at all displeased with the alteration—I am very well satisfied to escape the journey to Chalons, I promise you—I only hope that no doubt of my capacity for the mission occasioned it.

COUNT. (C.) Be at ease, sir, on that point. I do not think that even the duke himself would venture to question the capacity of any officer attached to the regiment I have the honour of commanding. No, no, but his highness preferred sending the despatch by one of his own secretaries, as there are matters connected with it, which he could more readily explain than another. (to FREDERICK) This is your first night on duty in the Dauphin's apartments, my dear Frederick?

FRED. (L.) It is, count.

COUNT. Very well; all I have to recommend to you is caution, vigilance, and a strict attention to discipline, which I expect from every officer, as from every private soldier—from you especially, as affianced to my own daughter.

FRED. I trust I shall give you no cause for complaint, Count.

COUNT. I do not expect it—but it is my duty to impress on you the necessity of strict attention to your orders. I am sorry that the irregular conduct of the Dauphin has necessitated the issue of such strict orders from his majesty. You will understand that no entreaties—no commands on the part of his highness are to have any weight with you, and that under no circumstances will you permit him to leave the palace.

FRED. I shall be careful, count.

COUNT. Then, gentlemen, you can to your posts. (*crosses to L.*) You will remain in the antechamber, immediately adjoining the Dauphin's apartments—the officer of this corridor will be Captain de Valmont.

VICTOR. (R.) I was afraid so!

COUNT. And now, good night, gentlemen—and be vigilant.

VICTOR. } Good night, count. *Exit COUNT, L. door.*
FRED. }

VICTOR. It's plaguily unlucky that De Valmont should be on guard to-night!

FRED. Why so?

VICTOR. Why, if I am not very much mistaken, his highness the Dauphin meditates breaking prison for an hour or so, and Adolphe is so wofully strict in his notions of duty, we may have some trouble with him.

FRED. Well, I think the less we connive at his highness's delinquencies, the safer, as well as the more honourable, it will be for us.

VICTOR. Ha, ha! what, another prude in the Royal Guards? For shame, Frederick! but you will be wiser when you have

worn the gloss off your new uniform. I've helped the lad in many an escape—and shall do so again—but I hope I am none the less a loyal subject or faithful soldier for all that.

FRED. But his majesty's orders—

VICTOR. Must be obeyed by his majesty's guards—we are the Dauphin's, and must obey his.

FRED. That's a dangerous piece of sophistry, Victor.

VICTOR. Pshaw! what were a soldier's career without danger? what would the king's commission be worth if it did not open the road to adventures? what would life itself be worth, if it were not made up of intrigue?

FRED. I find I must take care of my morals in the society of his highness's musketeers.

VICTOR. You have the pretty Marie Dilacour for a guardian angel—her influence should be sufficient to counteract that of a legion of musketeers!

FRED. It should be so, and doubtless would—but tell me how—if so strictly watched, the Dauphin contrives to elude detection?

VICTOR. Hush, man—not so loud! there is a private staircase in his apartments, leading to the gardens—one sentinel is always placed there—the same, as one of the most approved trust, and he is incorruptibly faithful—to the Dauphin.

FRED. I perceive. But this man is a traitor!

VICTOR. Pooh! he is only anticipating his loyalty. The Dauphin, you know, will be king one day—but come—(*going, R.*) it's more than time we should wait upon his highness.

FRED. I am ready—but I sincerely hope he will keep in bounds for this night, at least.

VICTOR. I *hope* so, too—but if otherwise—why, you see—of course, my dear Frederick—it must be otherwise.

Exeunt at door, R. U. E.

Enter ROSALIE from behind curtain, L. D. U. E., in full uniform of a Captain of Musketeers.

ROSALIE. Thus far all's well! Adolphe's directions were quite clear and correct; and here I am at my post. Now that I am at liberty to reflect a little, I must say that I think it is a thousand pities that I should be got up in this elaborately becoming manner; and that no one should see me. I hope my moustache will do me the distinguished honour of sticking on. Mercy! if they were to come off! all my military ardour would evaporate at once. I feel that it depends a good deal on my moustache, and if I'm not very much mistaken, a great many of my brother officers feel the same. This is really extremely laughable—a young lady of family and

repute mounting guard over that dissolute young devil of a Dauphin. If his highness only knew what a sentinel he had, it's highly probable that I should be honoured with an invitation to supper. Gracious! what a horrible supposition I've conjured up. I must send my thoughts in another direction, or I shall shame my uniform by turning coward outright. Hark! what's that!

VICTOR and FREDERICK appear at R. D.

FRED. (*in a low tone*) But—

VICTOR. (*the same*) Pshaw man, it's too late for *buts*. I tell you I can't go to him myself—he knows me, and would rebel, whereas you—

FRED. Yes, but it's confoundedly awkward.

VICTOR. I know it is, but absolutely necessary, so quick. The Dauphin will get impatient. VICTOR retires R. D.

ROSALIE. (L.) Now what's all that whispering? I'm beginning to get alarmed, very early in the evening.

FRED. (R. *aside*) I must do it, of course! the deuce take his wild freaks.

ROSALIE. (R., *aside*) A brother officer! Come, pluck up courage, Captain Rosalie. (*aloud*) Ahem! (*sternly*) Who goes there?

FRED. (R.) From his Highness the Dauphin!

ROSALIE. (L.) Oh!

FRED. I am sent to you by his highness.

ROSALIE. Sent to me by—(*aside*) Now, what on earth can the Dauphin want with me?

FRED. To you, Captain de Valmont, with a request—

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Perhaps, after all, it is an invitation to supper.

FRED. A request that you will oblige him with—

ROSALIE. My company? really I couldn't, I am on duty—it's quite impossible.

FRED. Not exactly—merely with your hat!

ROSALIE. My hat! (*aside*) Surely they don't keep the poor lad without a hat? (*aloud*) Certainly—at his Highness's service. (*gives it*)

FRED. And boots!

ROSALIE. What? May I ask, is the Dauphin entirely destitute of a wardrobe?

FRED. By no means—he simply requires yours for a particular purpose.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) This is frightful! how can I take off my boots?

FRED. Be quick, if you please!

ROSALIE. Sir, the demand is not only extremely unreasonable, but—ahem! utterly impracticable.

FRED. Are you aware, Captain de Valmont, that the Dauphin's demands are commands?

ROSALIE. (*aside*) What on earth am I to do? (*aloud*) Couldn't you—hem! couldn't you lend the Dauphin *your* boots!

FRED. Undoubtedly, if he asked for them—but he sent for yours.

ROSALIE. But does he imagine that I can walk up and down this corridor all night without boots?

FRED. How can I tell what he imagines. Come, sir, off with them at once.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) I could cry for shame and mortification—take off my boots before this horrid man! (*aloud*) Oh, sir, couldn't the Dauphin do with anybody's boots but mine?

FRED. This is folly, sir—if you persist in your refusal, I must return to his highness, who will visit you in person.

ROSALIE. Oh, no, no! (*aside*) Oh, Adolphe! Adolphe! this is Sisterly Service with a witness. (*aloud*) But I'm not at all sure these boots will come off. (*aside*) I know it took a long while to put them on.

FRED. Sir, this trifling passes patience. I must return to the Dauphin.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) No escape! I will, at least, humiliate this creature. (*aloud*) Sir, once for all, if you want my boots, you may take them off yourself. (*sits in chair, L.*)

FRED. Sir—but this is no time for altercation. (*crosses to L., and takes off boots*) You make as much fuss about it as if you were a great girl.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) I could pistol this man with all the pleasure in life.

FRED. At last. (*aside*) This De Valmont's a most egregious milksop. (*Exit, R. D., with boots and hat.*)

ROSALIE. Oh, if it were becoming an officer and a gentleman, how I could cry. But I shall hate the Dauphin and his musketeers as long as I live. What a very contemptible figure a captain of the guard must cut, parading about without his boots! independantly of which, although perhaps, that's somewhat immaterial, it's rather cooler than is quite agreeable. Oh, if Adolphe would but make haste!

Re-enter FREDERICK, R., with a pair of slippers.

As I live, this wretch is here again!

FRED. (R.) The Dauphin commiserating your temporary

inconvenience Captain de Valmont, has sent you a pair of his own slippers.

ROSALIE. (L.) His Highness is exceedingly polite and condescending I'm sure; but at the same time, as soon as he can let me have my boots, I shall thank him.

FRED. I only discharged a portion of my commission just now which has necessitated my return. The Dauphin is sorry to incommode you, but he is under the necessity of troubling you for your coat.

ROSALIE. My what—(aside) It's a mercy I didn't scream out!

FRED. Your coat, and be pleased to hurry. His Highness was offended at my previous delay.

ROSALIE. (aside) I feel that I shall faint—take off my coat. (aloud) Do you think it at all likely his highness will want anything else?

FRED. Impossible to say—if he does he will doubtless send for it.

ROSALIE. Is this a joke, sir, because if so, it is a very poor one?

FRED. No joke at all, sir.

ROSALIE. No, goodness knows, it passes a joke! this is worse than the boots!

FRED. Now, sir, quick if you please!

ROSALIE. But I can't take off my coat. Does the Dauphin know I'm—ahem—on guard, and that it is not customary to mount guard in slippers and shirt sleeves!

FRED. I apprehend he does know that much. Come, sir!

ROSALIE. Well, then, I *won't* take off my coat—there!

FRED. Won't, sir? to a command of the Dauphin's! I should advise you to consider the matter. Shall I assist you?

ROSALIE. (aside) I'll make Adolphe call this man out and kill him! (aloud) No, sir, you shall not assist me. Oh, there's a good creature, *do* lend the Dauphin *your* coat.

FRED. Why, what ails you? take it off at once, and don't make such a fuss about nothing.

ROSALIE. (aside) Nothing! what on earth can I do? if Adolphe had only taught me an oath or two. (aloud) But I shall catch my death of cold.

FRED. Pshaw!

ROSALIE. Well, let me go home and fetch another?

FRED. Ha, ha, ha! but, sir, I am getting out of patience with this foolery. You may possibly find yourself in the Bastille to-morrow.

ROSALIE. (aside) I wish to goodness I were there now!

FRED. Such mock modesty! (*bell rings, R.*) There's the Dauphin's bell. You will find your error, sir, if you detain me another moment.

ROSALIE. Don't be so impatient. (*aside*) No help—no hope! they might as well kill me at once as frighten me to death in this manner! (*fumbling coat*)

FRED. Now, sir!

ROSALIE. Well, it *won't* come undone!

FRED. Let me undo it for you.

ROSALIE. (*frightened*) No, no, keep away, do! I suppose I can manage my own coat. (*takes one arm out and hesitates—aside*) Oh, if I ever get into another. (*aloud*) Oh, please go and ask the Dauphin if he *can't* do without it!

FRED. Sir, my patience is exhausted.

ROSALIE. (*throwing coat at him*) Oh, there, there; and for goodness sake go away with it as soon as you can!

FRED. (*taking coat*) You'll make a valiant soldier some day. Good bye for the present, Captain Modest. *Exit R. D.*

ROSALIE. I shall die with shame and vexation. Was ever any unlucky girl in such a frightful situation? I shall never survive this night, that's very certain. The Dauphin 'll be sending for my moustache next, I shouldn't wonder! oh, this horrid, horrid dress, or rather what's left of it. If ever I make a musketeer of myself again! What would I not give for one of Fanchette's cotton petticoats; but it's by no means certain the Dauphin wouldn't borrow that too; but if that monster returns for anything else, as I'm living, I'll run him through. Hush! he is coming. No, footsteps in the other direction—then it's some one else. Now, what in mercy's name can he be coming for?

Enter COUNT DELACOUR, L. D.

COUNT. I certainly did hear voices in the corridor, which is a breach of discipline I neither can, nor will permit!

ROSALIE. (*aside, R.*) As I breathe, which I hardly do, it's that terrible old torment of mine, Delacour. It's all over with me now.

COUNT. (L.) What was the cause of—(*approaching ROSALIE and regarding her with amazement*) Eh? what! can I believe my eyes? it looks like an officer of his Highness's Musketeers, dressed like—like an opera dancer. The devil and all his family! can this horror be real. Come here, sir, and let me view this diabolical transformation! (*ROSALIE approaches, R., timidly*) It is so! and I have lived to see it; and this is not the officer I ordered here. You are not Adolphe de Valmont.

ROSALIE. No, sir, I am only his sis—substitute!

COUNT. And how dare he substitute anybody? and how dare anybody be substituted without his coat and boots? who are you, sir? who the devil are you?

ROSALIE. I am a relation of Adolphe de Valmont, sir!

COUNT. Are you? then I have the satisfaction of knowing that he will have one relation the less to-morrow. You shall be shot, sir—shot, if you were his brother.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) I said I shouldn't survive this night.

COUNT. What the devil have you done, sir, with your coat and boots?

ROSALIE. (*timidly*) Sir, I lent them.

COUNT. Lent them! 'sdeath, sir, did De Valmont pick you up at a wine shop, or have you escaped from a madhouse?

ROSALIE. Neither, sir! I was compelled to lend them.

COUNT. What! a man mounting guard over his Highness, the Dauphin, *compelled* to lend his coat and boots, sir?

ROSALIE. Yes, sir, since his Highness borrowed them himself!

COUNT. Ha! St. Denis! I see it now! how long ago was this?

ROSALIE. Not ten minutes, sir.

COUNT. I may not be too late to stop this reckless boy's freaks yet. (*goes to L. D.*) Here, guard!

A MUSKETEER enters L. D.—DELACOUR *whispers him, and he goes off, L. D.*

ROSALIE. Oh dear me, I don't know what to do, or what to say, or where I am. I wonder when I shall be shot; and to explain to this odious man who I am, would be only another and a worse kind of death.

COUNT. (*returns to L.*) And now, sir, whoever you may be, I neither know nor care—you will be nobody in a few hours; and as for De Valmont, this incredible breach of discipline shall be severely punished. You, sir, will at once be placed under arrest.

ROSALIE. And where am I to be put, please, sir?

COUNT. Here's a fine soldier for you! In the guard-room, sir, under the surveillance of the soldiers of the regiment.

ROSALIE. What, with the common men? (*aside*) What will be the end of this!

COUNT. Even so; and as the night wears tediously with those brave fellows, they may possibly amuse themselves by teaching you a few practical jokes of the guard-room.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Horror upon horror! I must tell all. (*aloud*) Oh, if you please, sir, I am not a soldier.

COUNT. Oh, very well, my fine fellow, then instead of being shot, you will be hanged, that's all.

ROSALIE. Oh, I hardly care if I am.

COUNT. After being soundly flogged for—

ROSALIE (*with a slight scream*) What? Count, I am Rosalie de Valmont.

COUNT. (*amazed, and regarding her attentively*) What? Rosalie de Valmont! the chief beauty and coquette of the quarter?

ROSALIE. There, you needn't stare at me so curiously. I should never have discovered myself but for your abominable threat of guard-rooms and flogging.

COUNT. (*aside*) This is the luckiest stroke of fortune that ever befel me; and how delicious she looks!

ROSALIE. The fact is, my brother had an appointment to-night, which to break would be perdition to him. The poor boy was so desperately in love and so absolutely in despair, that I was weakly good-natured enough to undertake the Sisterly Service of mounting guard for him; and now, please, Count Delacour, let me go home.

COUNT. Mademoiselle de Valmont, you have so often made me the target for your wit—ever ridiculing my profound devotion for you, that, now I have you in my power—

ROSALIE. You will use that power mercifully, and do please let me go home!

COUNT. Do not imagine I shall let such a chance escape me. What I have vainly sued for with humility, I can now exact with authority.

ROSALIE. (*haughtily*) Count Delacour!

COUNT. Ay, madame, but that disdainful look misbecomes you in this position and under these circumstances. Listen to me. Consent to return the love I bear you—become my wife! let me finish and all shall be forgotten—refuse, and not only shall your brother be degraded and dismissed the service, but I will expose and shame you before the whole regiment—even as you are!

ROSALIE. Count Delacour, this is the language of a coward.

COUNT. Treat it how you will—the game is in my hands. I am too sharp a gamester to throw it away. Your answer!

ROSALIE. (*aside*) This is getting too frightful. How to escape? (*aloud*) You will at least give me time to consider your proposal?

COUNT. Yes, but you do not quit the palace. I will give you until to-morrow morning, during which interval you will remain in my apartments here in the palace, under the charge of my daughter, whom I will send to you at once. Any

attempt to escape will be fatal, both to your brother and yourself. (*aside*) Now to change the password, and prevent any further confusion. *Exit L. D.*

ROSALIE. Marry you, you frightful old ourang-outang? never! I'll be shot, hanged, or, or flogged first! was ever woman persecuted in this frightful manner? horrid old fellow! would that I were a man, if only for a few minutes. Oh, Adolphe—Adolphe! you bad boy, where are you?

Enter ADOLPHE, hurriedly, L. D.

ADOLPHE. Rosalie!

ROSALIE. Ah! saved!

ADOLPHE. Now, quick and—heaven and earth, why, you've no coat on! And where in wonder's name are your boots?

ROSALIE. Oh, don't ask me—every moment is as precious as an ordinary year.

ADOLPHE. Well, but—

ROSALIE. Pray don't begin to chatter! give me your coat; and for goodness sake—don't be so long about it as I was.

ADOLPHE. What the deuce does all this mean?

ROSALIE. Oh, do take off your coat—you see I've got none.

ADOLPHE. Well, if I must—(*taking off coat*)

ROSALIE. Of course you must—I've gone through enough for you in all conscience—the most perplexing—preposterous series of—now quick, your boots!

ADOLPHE. My boots, too!

ROSALIE. (R.) Why, you foolish boy, can I go along the streets like this? There—oh, do—do make haste!

ADOLPHE. (*taking off boots*) I should really like to know what all this undressing—

ROSALIE. I can't stop to tell you a syllable about it—I'm more than half frightened to death as it is—I dare not even stay to put these things on here. (*crosses to L. door—looking off*) There's no one in the gallery. What's the pass-word? Oh, "*Fleur-de-lis*," I know—I wish you well through all accidents—but I've had quite enough for one night—so adieu, dear, and courage! *Exit with coat and boots, L. door.*

ADOLPHE. Well, this is a confoundedly ridiculous position for a man! What the plague can all this mystery be about? Rosalie stripped of her coat and boots—and no sooner do I come to relieve her, than, in a twinkling, I find myself in the same condition, some unlucky misadventure has happened—unless by chance the whole palace has gone mad—my hair-brained sister into the bargain—and I stand a chance of making matters better certainly—considering that I know nothing about anything. Well, let us hope the confusion won't get

further confounded, that's all. This is really a most uncomfortable costume—besides, being a very preposterous one—

MARIE DELACOUR *appears at L. D.*

Eh? why, here comes a woman—and I am half undressed! Oh, this will never do!

MARIE. (*runs to ADOLPHE, and kisses him*) My dearest De Valmont!

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) Oh, they are all mad, it's plain.

MARIE. (L.) Who would have dreamt of seeing you here?

ADOLPHE. (R.) Is there anything so very remarkable in that, mademoiselle?

MARIE. Oh, you wild creature! and in such a dress, too! for shame!

ADOLPHE. Well, I *am* rather ashamed of my dress, I admit!

MARIE. But you look very nice, nevertheless.

ADOLPHE. Thank you. (*aside*) I wonder if this young party had my coat and boots?

MARIE. Papa told me all about it.

ADOLPHE. Oh, he did? (*aside*) I wish some one would confer the same favour upon me!

MARIE. Just fancy—my kissing an officer of the musketeers, isn't it funny?

ADOLPHE. Extremely funny, I think! (*aside*) Very far gone, poor girl!

MARIE. And I shall do it again, just for the novelty of the thing. (*kisses him*)

ADOLPHE. Oh, really, mademoiselle—(*aside*) I don't say this is at all unpleasant, but it's very perplexing!

MARIE. How can you endure those horrid rough moustaches, they tear one's cheek to pieces!

ADOLPHE. It would be rather inconvenient to remove them, mademoiselle.

MARIE. Yes, of course, just now—and here! but when we're alone, I'll soon have them off for you.

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) Will you? this is getting awkward! (*aloud*) Excuse me, mademoiselle—

MARIE. Oh, don't be so formal. Mademoiselle, indeed! say Marie.

ADOLPHE. Marie, then—is not this rather an unsuitable place for you?

MARIE. Yes, and for you too—we'll go away directly.

ADOLPHE. We?

MARIE. Of course. You know you are to be my guest for to-night.

ADOLPHE. Eh? (*aside*) This is positively getting serious!

MARIE. But I'm sure I don't know how I shall manage with you!

ADOLPHE. Manage—with me?

MARIE. Yes; you see you are so much taller than I am, my dresses will be too short for you.

ADOLPHE. Your dresses! (*aside*) Confound it! is she going to put me into petticoats? She certainly had the coat and boots, and now wants the rest of the dress.

MARIE. Still I must contrive something—you must take those shocking things off!

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) I shall have to summon the guard, that's quite evident.

FREDERICK *appears at door, R., with hat, coat, and boots.*

FRED. (*aside*) The Dauphin's frolic's spoilt—new sentries have been posted at the door. Some one must have betrayed him! Now to restore these things!

MARIE. I have no doubt but that you feel very grand and important in that uniform?

FRED. (R., *aside*) Hark! Voices!

ADOLPHE. On the contrary, I never felt so little in my life.

FRED. (R., *aside*) As I live, it is my Marie, with that puppy De Valmont; what can she want here? (*listening*)

MARIE. But come, I am sure your poor dear legs must feel very cold without boots.

FRED. (*aside*) His poor dear legs! Curse his poor dear legs!

ADOLPHE. Not quite so warm as might be wished—but really—

MARIE. Come along, then, to my room at once! (*going, L.*)

ADOLPHE. Eh? upon my word, mademoiselle—

FRED. (*advancing, R.*) This is too much—so, madame—

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) Another of the party now!—with the missing property!

MARIE. What, Frederick—you here? Go away directly, sir!

FRED. Not till I understand, madam, why I find you talking with Captain de Valmont at this hour of the night?

MARIE. Captain! why, you great jealous goose! this is my old schoolfellow, Rosalie de Valmont.

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) Oho! this little girl has mistaken me for Rosalie!

FRED. There are your schoolfellow's boots and coat then. (*throwing them down, centre of stage*) You don't deceive me thus, madam—I have seen this gentleman once or twice before to-night.

MARIE. Oh, you stupid. Come, Rosalie, speak for yourself, dear.

ADOLPHE. I am very sorry to distress you, madam—but I certainly am Adolphe de Valmont.

MARIE. You Adolphe de—(*screams*) Oh, Frederick! protect me! (*rushing across to him*) Indeed—indeed, papa sent me here, and said I should find Rosalie dressed as a musketeer, and—I find—(*sobbing*) a great odious man!

ADOLPHE. That's good! after the hugging she gave me!

FRED. Captain de Valmont, I shall expect satisfaction for this outrage!

ADOLPHE. You shall have it, sir—I am never remiss in accommodations of that sort. But I am bound, in justice, to vindicate this lady, whom I devoutly believe to be the victim of an error.

FRED. (R. C.) If so, sir, it was an error of which you were, in honour, bound to take no advantage.

ADOLPHE. Admitted, sir; but the lady was so demonstrative, and human nature is so weak, that really—

Re-enter COUNT DELACOUR, L. door.

COUNT. (L.) What is all this uproar?

MARIE. (*rushing across to him*) Oh, papa, it's a man!

COUNT. What's a man? who's a man? where's a man?

MARIE. That—there—he! (*sobbing*) And I kissed him, I did—twice—the wretch!

FRED. (R.) That's agreeable—confound him!

COUNT. Psha! (*crossing to FREDERICK, R.*) You can retire, sir—you will have to account for your share in this night's business to-morrow.

FRED. Pardon me, count, I must, at least—

COUNT. (R. C.) Do you dispute my orders, sir? (FREDERICK retires to back, and talks to MARIE—COUNT aside to ADOLPHE) Madam, are you prepared to accept my terms?

ADOLPHE. Upon my honour, Count Delacour, you do me too much honour in mistaking me for a lady!

COUNT. By St. Denis! it is Adolphe de Valmont!

ADOLPHE. (L. C.) Undoubtedly. Pray, sir, who should it be?

COUNT. What mystification is this? (*aside*) It is impossible I could have been mistaken? (*aloud*) Where's your sister, sir?

ADOLPHE. Where all good little girls should be at this hour—in bed and asleep, I hope!

COUNT. (*aside*) How can the cunning baggage have escaped? (*aloud*) This subterfuge will not avail you, sir. How came you here?

ADOLPHE. How? Was I not appointed the guard here?

COUNT. Then why were you not here, sir?

ADOLPHE. But you perceive that I am here, count.

COUNT. Have you the effrontery, sir, to tell me to my face, that you have kept the entire watch yourself?

ADOLPHE. If anyone but my superior officer had asked such a question, I should find a very ready way of answering it.

COUNT. An evasion. Do you mean to affirm that you have been in arms the whole evening?

ADOLPHE. I do, count. (*aside*) In Isabelle's

COUNT. Then I'm bewitched—that's the end of it.

FRED. (*down, R.*) I can vouch, count, for Captain de Valmont having been here throughout the evening, inasmuch as I was weak and culpable enough to borrow his coat and boots for—

COUNT. Indeed, sir! it does great credit to your penetration. You borrowed those things from a lady, sir; and how this fellow has managed to take her place, passes my conception, but I will unravel it.

ADOLPHE. Perhaps, count, you will be good enough to—

COUNT. Hold your tongue, sir, I tell you you were a woman ten minutes ago, or I was an ass.

ADOLPHE. Really, count, if you persist in asserting that I have the power of transforming myself from a man to a woman at pleasure, you give me credit for a great deal more talent than I possess!

COUNT. I'm completely mystified.

ADOLPHE. (*aside*) And I, utterly. (*aloud*) You perceive, count, that I lent my boots and coat to this gentleman; and, as a proof that they are really mine, with this lady's permission, I will put them on. (*does so*)

COUNT. Marie, you can retire.

MARIE. (L.) Yes, papa! (*kisses her hand to FREDERICK*) Ugh! you monster! (*to ADOLPHE, as she is going off, L. D.*)

COUNT. As for you, Frederick, you will return to the Dauphin's room and desire Captain Victor to come and mount guard here. You, Captain de Valmont, will oblige me by descending to the guard-room and reporting your arrest. (*aside and crossing to L.*) And as for me, I may as well go and knock my head against the wall, for a blundering old fool as I am.

Exit, L. D.

FRED. Remember, sir!

ADOLPHE. I'm not at all likely to forget it.

Exit FREDERICK, R. D.

Well, this is a pretty entanglement! hang me if I can make any guess what it is all about; but it appears to me to be the most incomprehensible mixture of boots, hats, kisses, quar-

rels, and general confusion I ever had the honour of being a party to. Let me hope somebody will show a light presently. Who the deuce could have wanted Rosalie's boots? but it is no use worrying my brains about the matter. I'm under arrest, and that's quite enough for me to attend to at present.

Exit L. D.

Enter VICTOR, R. D.

VICTOR. This is pleasant! just as I was preparing for a solemn slumber, to be turned out to mount guard here. There's some confounded evil spirit at work to-night. The Dauphin's frolic detected and discomfited—poor De Valmont under arrest for lending his clothes, and Frederick swearing he'll run him through in the morning. How could old Delacour have found it all out? However, we shall hear of it in the morning, I warrant; and what will my darling Rosalie say when she hears of Adolphe's mishaps? I shall dread to break it to her.

Enter OFFICER and TWO GUARDS, L., with ROSALIE.

OFFICER. (C.) Captain, here's a young fellow we caught trying to leave the palace with the wrong pass-word. I should have locked him up, but he begged so hard to be brought to the officer on guard, here, that I could not resist him.

VICTOR. (R.) Very well, you can leave him, if he wants *me*.

OFFICER. You will be responsible, then, captain!

Exeunt OFFICER and GUARD, L. D.

ROSALIE. (L., *aside*) Thank goodness! he's got his coat and boots again. (*aloud*) Oh, they have changed the password. (*sees VICTOR, R., aside*) Mercy on me, it's Victor! now what will become of me?

VICTOR. Well, young fellow, what do you want with me?

ROSALIE. Oh, nothing whatever.

VICTOR. Then why ask to be brought here? who are you, and how came you by that uniform? I don't recognise you as belonging to the regiment.

ROSALIE. I don't belong to any regiment—and please don't talk to me.

VICTOR. Come here, sir, and let me look at you.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Oh, if a small earthquake would but take place and swallow me and my uniform, how happy I should be to go down.

VICTOR. Come here, I say—do you hear me?

ROSALIE. I tell you I don't belong to the regiment, so I'm not under your orders.

VICTOR. Answer me like that again, you impudent young

rogue, and I'll have the dust beaten out of that gay coat of yours.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) This is the man who swears he is my slave, too!

VICTOR. Are you coming here?

ROSALIE. I—don't like to be stared at?

VICTOR. Who wants to stare at you, you young monkey?

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Monkey! the last time he saw me I was an angel.

VICTOR. (*violently*) Come here! (*ROSALIE advances timidly*) Hold up your head! I have certainly seen that saucy face somewhere before.

ROSALIE. (*demurely*) Have you, sir? (*aside*) I'll see if my name has any effect upon him! (*aloud*) If you don't let me alone, and be quite quiet—I'll tell—Rosalie de Valmont of you.

VICTOR. Rosalie de Valmont! you young puppy! how dare you mention that lady's name? what do you know of her?

ROSALIE. I know her very well—and she's very fond of me.

VICTOR. You impudent impostor! I'll have your ears off if you venture to repeat that; and now you have dared to mention that name, depend upon it, I'll know more of you before we part. (*takes her by the arm, and brings her forward*) Now, sir, what do you pretend to know of this lady?

ROSALIE. Oh, don't be so rough, and let me go, do! (*throws off his hand*) I know that she'd be very much obliged to you if you could smuggle me out of the palace.

VICTOR. Indeed! now if you don't tell me at once who you are! and what you know of that lady and myself—what is your errand here, I'll give you the soundest beating you ever had in your life.

ROSALIE. Beat me! (*aside*) Oh patience, this is too much! (*aloud*) Oh, if I could only draw my sword! (*trying to do so*)

VICTOR. It would serve to beat you with as well as anything else. I believe you to be some page or other, who has stolen his master's clothes, and, probably, you are here as a spy—we'll soon see that—I'll have you down to the guard room and there thoroughly searched. (*crosses to L.*)

ROSALIE. No, no, no! (*aside*) Search in the guard room! I get from bad to worse—I must give way! (*aloud*) Here! here!

VICTOR. Well, will you confess?

ROSALIE. Victor de Beamegard! I command you to kneel down and ask my pardon for the scandalous threats you have held out to me.

VICTOR. Kneel down! ask pardon? why you preposterous young lunatic, I'll—

ROSALIE. You'll do as I tell you—you've been at my feet often enough.

VICTOR. Now, by heaven!

ROSALIE. Kneel, sir, if you hope ever for another smile from Rosalie de Valmont! (*removing her hat*)

VICTOR. Rosalie! am I dreaming? owl of darkness that I was—

ROSALIE. Don't look at me so—did you hear my orders?

VICTOR. (*kneeling*) Beloved, Rosalie!

ROSALIE. There, get up, and don't look so amazed.

VICTOR. (*rises*) How in wonder's name came you here, and thus dressed?

ROSALIE. Oh! nay ask me no questions now—suffice to say I am in imminent danger—so is Adolphe! I assumed his place on guard, and the most terrible consequences have resulted.

VICTOR. What? was it you then whose boots—

ROSALIE. Don't, Victor! pray don't! Adolphe, is arrested, and I shall be shamed, unless—

VICTOR. Not while I have a sword!

ROSALIE. There is but one hope—Delacour has me in his power—you go to the Dauphin and implore him to interpose his authority to screen my brother and myself, and if you can prevail—there's my hand, Victor, I'll marry you to-morrow.

VICTOR. You will! then the Dauphin (*crossing to R.*) must be obdurate indeed, if I fail to move him with such a reward in view—(*going, stops*) but I'm on duty—I dare not leave!

ROSALIE. Be at ease, it is not the first time to-night, I have assumed the post—I will replace you for the short time you will be absent. No one will come—but go, go at once.

VICTOR. I go, dearest—this night of mishaps is likely to be the brightest of my life. *Exit VICTOR, R. D.*

ROSALIE. Oh dear, on guard once more in this horrid place! And to have met Victor, too! Not an hour ago I was in tribulation because no one could see me in this most *detestable* dress—and now *he* of all men to have witnessed my stupidity! Oh, I could almost hate him for it! I know I shall turn pale at the sight of a musketeer's uniform for years to come. Mercy on me, here's some one again! Will my misery never be over? Who, now, for goodness sake?—the count, as I am a woman! Then I am utterly lost!

Re-enter COUNT, L. D.

COUNT. I must take steps to prevent any unnecessary disclosure, for my own sake! Captain Victor, a word with you!

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Ugh! you disagreeable old monster.

COUNT. Captain Victor, I say! (*turns and recognizes ROSALIE*) Eh! what! again! What devilry is at work here—am I deceived this time? It was you, then, after all—and not a ghost—where have you been? How the deuce did you get here? What have you done with Captain Victor? How did you get your boots back? And last of all, are you yourself or your brother?

ROSALIE. (*aside*) I must brave it out! (*aloud*) I really don't understand what you are talking about, sir! I am keeping guard here for my friend, Captain Victor.

COUNT. You seem bent upon keeping guard for the whole regiment—I presume I have the honor again of addressing Mademoisell de Valmont?

ROSALIE. I am really not accountable for your presumption, sir!

COUNT. Very fine, madam! but you do not foil me a second time—perhaps you will favour me with a reply to the question I asked you during our last conversation—when I saw you without coat and boots?

ROSALIE. I have really no remembrance of having been gratified with a view of you without coat and boots—and pardon me, if I add, I have no desire to be so gratified.

COUNT. Phsaw! madame, perhaps you will also choose to forget that I made you an offer of marriage!

ROSALIE. Indeed! I was not aware that it was customary for musketeers to marry their commanding officers!

COUNT. You are playing with me, madam!

ROSALIE. Heaven forbid! I hope to know how to choose my playfellows better.

COUNT. I'll just trouble you to answer me one question!

ROSALIE. It's contrary to all discipline to talk on guard—so I shall answer nothing more! (*aside*) Oh, if Victor would but come!

COUNT. As you please, madam! Then I have but one course left!

Goes to door, L. D.

ROSALIE. (*aside*) Gracious! what is he going to do now?

COUNT. Guard! bring Captain de Valmont here! (*goes round to R. D.*)

ROSALIE. (*aside*) What can he want to do to poor Adolphe! I cannot endure this much longer—persecuted and stared at by all these horrid men, one after the other, it's terrible!

Enter MARIE, L. D.

MARIE. I'm dying to know what's going on!

ROSALIE. Ah! thank heaven! I see a woman at last. (*runs and embraces MARIE*) my dearest Marie!

MARIE. (*screaming*) Oh, get away, you horrid musketeer!

ROSALIE. Why, Marie!

MARIE. No, no! You are a man, and I won't be kissed!

ROSALIE. Don't you know me, Marie? Your dear Rosalie!

MARIE. Rosalie! Oh, but is it really you?

ROSALIE. Oh! yes—yes!

COUNT. (*coming down, R.*) So you admit it, madam!

Enter ADOLPHE, L. D., with GUARD—the GUARD retires, L. D.

ROSALIE. I do, sir—to my shame and humiliation.

ADOLPHE. Fear nothing! (*crosses to L. C.*) Rosalie, all blame shall be borne by me, and never shall I forget your piece of devoted Sisterly Service.

COUNT. Hear me, sir! I have made this lady an offer which most ladies would pause before rejecting—the offer of my hand! If she accepts it, all is well—and this night's folly dies in silence—if not, mark me well, Captain de Valmont, you quit the service in disgrace, and your sister's name will be a byeword in Paris.

ADOLPHE. (*L. C.*) I can scarcely believe a soldier and a gentleman capable of conceiving so mean and paltry a proposal; but be assured Count Delacour, that were it to save me from direct disgrace—the most ignominious punishment—my sister should not bestow her hand, unaccompanied by her heart; and be further assured, that, whosoever, be he peer or peasant, who shall breathe upon that sister's good name, shall dearly account to me for it.

COUNT. Very well, sir, we shall see!

MARIE. But Rosalie is betrothed to Captain Victor, papa.

COUNT. Be silent, girl!

ROSALIE. She is, Marie! and will keep her troth-plight in spite of all this gallant soldier's frowns.

COUNT. You reject me, Madam?

ROSALIE. Absolutely! were you the only marriageable man in France.

COUNT. Then, by Heaven, my threat shall be accomplished! (*crosses to L.*) What ho, guard!

Enter VICTOR, R. D.

ROSALIE. Ah, Victor!

VICTOR. (*R.*) Count Delacour, I have his highness, the Dauphins express commands, that the business of this night be buried in oblivion by all the parties concerned, on pain of his highness's heaviest displeasure against any one who shall divulge it.

ROSALIE. (*giving her hand*) Dear, Victor! I will keep my word!

COUNT. (*aside*) I must obey—devil take the Dauphin's commands.

ADOLPHE. There are two things that, in spite of the Dauphin's commands, I can never bury in oblivion—my dear sister's service and the remembrance of the two kisses I received from—

MARIE. (L.) You odious musketeer, be quiet, do!

ROSALIE. (R. C.) And I am sure I shall never bury in oblivion the lamentable state of undress to which I was reduced, and the narrow escape I had of being hanged, shot, and flogged—and worse than all, of being married to the noble count there.

COUNT. (L.) I admit my error, madame, and shall strictly obey his highness's orders by burying everything in oblivion—even my disappointment.

ROSALIE. Then we are friends, count?

MARIE. I'm sure I wish I *could* bury it all in oblivion—but I feel sure that I shall dream of the moustache and legs of musketeers for a month to come.

Enter FREDERICK, R. D.

FRED. (R.) The Dauphin bids me say he should be happy to have five minutes private conversation with Mademoiselle de Valmont.

ADOLPHE. I oppose that. (*aside*) Young rogue!

VICTOR. (R. c.) And I!

ROSALIE, (c.) And I!

COUNT. (L.) And I! its diametrically opposed to all discipline,
(crossing to R.) I'll go and speak to his highness myself. *Exit R.D.*
(FREDERICK goes round to L.)

ADOLPHE. Sister, let me, in the presence of all here, again thank you for your kind and generous assistance.

ROSALIE. You have indeed, much to thank me for, if you knew what I have, endured for you. But after all it depends upon our friends here to recompense me for the sufferings I have undergone. (*coming forward*) If I have been fortunate enough to win your approval, I shall be amply rewarded, and shall be only too happy on many future occasions to discharge the same piece of—SISTERLY SERVICE.

VICTOR.
R.

ROSALIE.

ADOLPHE.

MARIE.

FREDERICK.
L.

CURTAIN.

Wooler (2)

THE
WILFUL WARD.

A Comedietta,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

J. P. WOOLER, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

Laurence's Love Suit, Love in Livery, Founded on Facts, A Twice Told Tale
Sisterly Service, Did I Dream It? A Faint Heart who *did* Win Fair Lady,
Orange Blossoms, Old Phil's Birthday, Allow me to Apologize, I'll
Write to the "Times," Keep your Temper, Marriage at any
Price, Plots for Petticoats, The Silver Wedding, The
Maid of Honour, A Man without a Head, &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND, LONDON.

THE WILFUL WARD.

First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre (under the management of Mrs. Swanborough), on Monday, November 14th, 1864.

Characters.

SIR PEREGRINE PLACID.....Mr. H. J. TURNER.

CHARLES FAIRFAX Mr. JAMES.

FREDERICK LISPINGTON Mr. BELFORD.

THOMAS

ROSE LESTER Miss M. PALMER.

MODERN COSTUMES.

Time of Performance—Forty Minutes.

THE WILFUL WARD.

SCENE.—*Drawing Room in the house of Sir Peregrine Placid—doors, C., R. 1 E., R. 3 E., and L. 1 E.*

Enter THOMAS *preceding* FREDERICK LISPINGTON, L.

THOMAS. I'll let Sir Peregrine know you are here, sir.

FRED. Of course you will, what's the use of telling me that !

Exit THOMAS, C. to R.

FRED. (*throws himself on sofa*) What on earth can possess folks to have the entrance to their houses down a lane, or up a lane, or in a lane at all, and give me the trouble of walking through it in the sun, too. I'm fatigued to death, and melted down afterwards—they ought positively to put awnings over all these confounded country lanes; and if I ever get into Parliament I'll make 'em do it. I wonder how I shall prosper in my love suit to day! it's very hard work—although I take it pretty easily; it will very much depend upon what quarter the wind of the old boy's temper blows—first I shall have her—then I *shan't* have her—but I must make a violent effort and bring her to the point myself—but it's very fatiguing !

Enter SIR PEREGRINE *and* THOMAS, R.

SIR P. Confound it! how dare *my* servants take these liberties with *my* property—turn out *my* books from *my* study—and cut down *my* poplar tree—and——

THOMAS. It was Miss Lester's order, sir.

SIR P. Confound Miss—no—never mind—but if I catch any of you obeying any more of Miss Lester's orders, I'll discharge him, there—at least—well, no—perhaps I won't do that—but I'll talk to her—go away, sir! *Exit* THOMAS, C. to L. That incorrigible hussey will drive me mad—I'll get rid of her—I will, by —ah, Lispington !

FRED. (*on sofa, L. C., holding out his hand*) Ah, Sir Peregrine ! how do, how do ?

SIR P. If you want me to shake your hand, sir, you'll bring it here—d'ye think I'm coming there for it !

FRED. Never mind, I'll shake it for you, there! Well, is it all right ?

SIR P. No, sir, it is *not* all right—nothing's right, everything's all wrong, and I'm in a diabolical ill temper !

Gen. Rev. 24 Fe 47, Spencer

FRED. Sorry for you, it's very fatiguing!

SIR P. Well, if you've got anything to say, why don't you come off that sofa and say it?

FRED. Thank you. I can talk very well lying here. I merely came to ascertain how my prospects stand with Miss Lester.

SIR P. I wish with all my soul, you'd take her away and marry her at once.

FRED. I've no objection, if she'll go and get ready.

SIR P. She's the torment of my existence. A self-willed—uncontrollable—provoking—preposterous——

FRED. Don't excite yourself, it's so fatiguing; but, now do you really think I have a chance?

SIR P. Oh, yes! she said yesterday you were a very pleasant young man.

FRED. Ah!

SIR P. Yes—you said so little, and that was so utterly harmless and insignificant.

FRED. Ah! Don't you think that was rather ambiguous?

SIR P. I've made up my mind—she *shall* marry you!

FRED. I'd rather she had made up hers; but if she objects?

SIR P. Then I'd carry her off by force. By Jove! I'll give you leave.

FRED. Too fatiguing; she may carry *me* off if she likes.

SIR P. Psha! now look here: I've made up my mind to get rid of her—I won't be tormented with her any longer. She brings on a fit of the gout every fortnight.

FRED. I say, Sir Peregrine, do you know I've my doubts of that smug secretary of yours.

SIR P. Doubts, sir—what do you mean? He's a young man of great ability, and the highest integrity.

FRED. But I mean with regard to Miss Lester—I fancy somehow he's smitten in that quarter.

SIR P. Eh—what? preposterous! *My secretary* dare to—pooh! pooh! Depend upon it, if he's smitten in that quarter, I'd take good care he shouldn't be long before he was smitten in another quarter. I say *you* shall have her. Can you come back in half an hour?

FRED. I didn't intend going away.

SIR P. But you must—I must see her alone.

FRED. Can't you stow me away somewhere?

SIR P. Yes; go into the library.

FRED. Is there a sofa there?

SIR P. Yes, yes; and plenty of books to pass away the time.

FRED. I never read—it's too fatiguing.

SIR P. Hark—no—yes. (*ROSE sings without*) She's coming now—jump up and run away.

FRED. Never jump—(*gets up leisurely*)—and never run—it's very much too fatiguing—ta, ta! Come for me when you want me; and if I'm asleep, wake me. *Exit, yawning, R. U. E.*

SIR P. Remarkably bright specimen of young England that! a nice husband he'll make—I should say—very—but I don't care for that—so that I get that precious ward of mine off my hands—I—ahem!

Enter ROSE, C. from L.

ROSE. Good morning, guardy—my dear, cross-grained, agreeable, ill-tempered, darling guardy, good morning!

SIR P. Miss, I want to ask you one question—

ROSE. Now, don't puzzle me—is it a difficult one? Because if it is, I'm sure I shan't be able to answer it.

SIR P. No, Miss, it's a very easy one—simply, are you not ashamed of yourself?

ROSE. Oh, dear no, not at all!

SIR P. What did you mean by having all the books and tables taken out of my study, and sending workmen to add it to your conservatory?

ROSE. Because my, dear guardy, I was sick of those nasty, musty books—and am very fond of bright pretty flowers.

SIR P. (*angrily*) And I say, that I will not allow these impertinent liberties—I—

ROSE. (*coaxingly*) Was it in a passion, then—poor dear, calm its perturbed spirit, like a dove as it is—

SIR P. (*half inclined to smile*) Go along, do! and then—worse and more flagrant injury—how dare you order that poplar to be cut down?

ROSE. How dare people build horrid poplars before my bed room window?

SIR P. Do you know the veneration I attached to that poplar, the "Peregrine Poplar," called after a great great great grandfather and namesake of mine, who fought in the Civil Wars, and himself discomfited a body of forty Roundheads?

ROSE. Forty, guardy, what a brave Peregrine! but I'm afraid that's a bit of a fib!

SIR P. Not at all! met them on the high road, they wanted to cut his throat, but he discomfited them all, by *running away*.

ROSE. Oh! then he wasn't such a very brave Peregrine after all!

SIR P. The mischief's done now and can't be repaired; but now understand me once for all, Rose, I will *not* allow you to conduct yourself in this reckless manner, you are under my authority and—

ROSE. *And*, my dear guardy, you know as well as I do, that I won't be contradicted; you know when poor papa went away to India, that he told you I was not to be thwarted or contradicted in anything, because of my delicate health.

SIR P. No, miss, your papa said nothing of the sort ; it was your fool of a doctor ! and *he's* in a lunatic asylum !

ROSE. Well, I don't care who said it, *I won't* be contradicted ; and if I chose to walk about with my back hair down—if I chose to whistle negro melodies—to drive a mail cart—play at billiards or smoke cigars—you know very well I should do it !

SIR P. Very well, miss, you'll not do it here ! I've made up my mind—you shall be married, you shall—by the fallen honor of the Peregrine poplar——

ROSE. An oath of much might ; and the idea is by no means a bad one. Please who's to marry me ?

SIR P. Well, I think——

ROSE. Oh, pray, don't consider me ; a general officer or a general postman's all the same to me ; perhaps you'd like to marry me yourself ?

SIR P. Heaven forbid !

ROSE. Or your secretary, Mr. Fairfax, perhaps ?

SIR P. Pshaw, nonsense—I mean Mr. Fred Lisingington !

ROSE. Do you really ? Now my dear guardy, what *is* the use of talking all this nonsense ?—you know very well I won't be married unless I think proper !

SIR P. I know very well you won't do *anything* unless you think proper.

ROSE. You mean, unless I think it a right and proper thing to do.

SIR P. No, I don't miss ! I mean what I say ; that you're the most self-willed, obstinate, tiresome, unmanagable—*don't* look at me in that way ; I won't have it ; I'm in a furious passion ! I—I—bless your pretty face !

ROSE. There—there—it's all over, isn't it ? I say, guardy, what a very bad tailor you employ.

SIR P. What the deuce is that to you ?

ROSE. Everything ; don't I wish to see my own dear, disagreeable guardian the best drest guardian in London. I'll ask Mr. Fairfax to send you his tailor—he dresses charmingly.

SIR P. Mr. Fairfax—employ my secretary's tailor ! Although I admit Mr. F. to be a very able and meritorious young man——

ROSE. Certainly, if he's a better one than your own. See, here's a coat ! I never saw such a comical thing in my life ; and I don't like that nasty black ribbon you've got for your eyeglass. Here, wait a moment. (*goes to table*)

SIR P. I can't be angry with her for five minutes together to save my life.

ROSE. (*returning with scissors*) There ! (*cuts ribbon*) Now put the glass in your pocket.

SIR P. (*furiously*) How dare you do that ? Do you suppose I'll put up with these liberties from a chit of a girl like you. If I wavered a little since, I'm firm as adamant now. You *shall* be married, and I'll be rid of you.

ROSE. Poor old dear, then. (*putting her arm round his neck*)

SIR P. Get away—nothing on earth can move me.

ROSE. But what would my good guardian say, when he found that his poor little ward, who is anxious to see him look smart, had worked a nice chain for him—all of her own hair? (*takes out chain and shews him*)

SIR P. Eh? what!—for me—a chain—own hair—for me! You don't mean to say for the old, cross, passionate!—Rose, my own darling pet, give me a kiss! (*kisses her—aside*) Hang me, if anybody shall marry her!

ROSE. Well now, guardy, about my marriage?

SIR P. Never mind that now, my love, I must think about it.

ROSE. I always thought poor papa wished me to marry your nephew Arthur.

SIR P. So he did, my dear, but never speak of him—a boy who could run away from home and send no tidings of himself for years, must have been a bad boy and gone wrong. *He* shall have no ward of mine! I haven't seen him for fourteen years—I never wish to see him again.

ROSE. But suppose I'm in love with him, and have made up my mind to marry him?

SIR P. How can you be in love with a boy you can scarcely remember?

ROSE. Oh, never mind, guardy; if I chose to marry a man I never saw, I think I should do it you know; and perhaps poor Arthur has done no harm after all.

SIR P. Perhaps not—I hope not—but I have long ceased to think of him, one way or the other; but we won't talk of marrying anybody just yet, will we, my pet?

ROSE. Not just yet, guardy. Where are you going?

SIR P. Only to write a few letters—see you again presently—you're a darling girl, and I don't know *any* man who's worthy of you. (*aside*) Now I'll just go and send Mr. Fred Lippington about *his* business. *Exit, C. to L.*

ROSE. Ha! ha! ha! poor dear old guardy; he little knows what a household conspirator his amiable ward is. (*tap at door*) Come in.

Enter CHARLES FAIRFAX, L.

CHARLES. I beg your pardon, Miss Lester, I thought Sir Peregrine was here.

ROSE. You thought wrong you see—but you can come in.

CHARLES. I only wished to—

ROSE. Come in, I say—good gracious! will you do as you're told? One would fancy I was of no importance in this house; nobody seems to mind me.

CHARLES. Excuse me, Miss Lester, I think you seem to order most things your own way.

ROSE. Why, you see, Mr. Fairfax, I have a will of my own, and they say when one has a will of one's own, it's easy to get a *way* of one's own. I want to learn German—can you teach me?

CHARLES. I—yes, Miss Lester—I should be proud of the office; but surely at school you——

ROSE. Oh! hang school; don't talk of school—I hated school, and especially I hated German: for the horrid man who taught it, always wore hideous boots, and smelt of tobacco. But stop—no, never mind German—I want you to pity me, Mr. Fairfax.

CHARLES. Can there be any grounds on which Miss Lester is to be pitied?

ROSE. Oh, acres! but in particular on this ground—my guardian wants to marry me!

CHARLES. (*disturbed*) What—himself?

ROSE. Ha, ha, ha! No, no, poor man, he'd like to live a little longer; and he knows the fate of the man who marries me.

CHARLES. (*aside*) Would that I could brave that fate!

ROSE. No; he wants me to marry Mr. Lispington.

CHARLES. (*earnestly*) What! that empty—shallow—conceited fop! Without thought—feeling—or intelligence; a selfish animal who has not an idea beyond his toilet—or a thought beyond himself. Oh, monstrous!

ROSE. (*aside*) This rouses him—good. (*aloud*) You speak warmly, Mr. Fairfax.

CHARLES. Excuse me, Miss Lester—I spoke unguardedly; and have most unpardonably forgotten *my* position and *your* presence.

ROSE. Don't be uneasy, Mr. Fairfax; I think absolutely as you do.

CHARLES. (*aside*) Thank heaven for that!

ROSE. It was once arranged, I believe, that I was to marry a certain nephew of my guardian.

CHARLES. (*aside*) Ah!

ROSE. But he seems to have turned an idle vagabond—good-for-nothing scapegrace!

CHARLES. Indeed, Miss Lester; you do him great injustice—that is——

ROSE. Goodness! why, what can you know about him?

CHARLES. I—oh, nothing! I mean you *may* be doing him an injustice.

ROSE. I know this—that he has been wandering about under an assumed name.

CHARLES. You *know* that!

ROSE. Yes; and the assumed name into the bargain.

CHARLES. And that is——

ROSE. *Charles Fairfax!*

CHARLES. What, Rose, you *know* me?

ROSE. If gentlemen *will* leave copies of Lalla Rookh about with their names in them, what's to prevent their being known?

CHARLES. And you forgive my innocent deception;

ROSE. Yes, if it be innocent; and if you tell me why you entered this house in so clandestine a manner.

CHARLES. At once. I had always known of our proposed engagement; I was anxious to see and judge of the lady to whom I was committed. Secure of not being recognized, I obtained the post of secretary to your guardian—to be near you and form my own opinion. Need I say that the reality has overpassed my wildest anticipations.

ROSE. I suppose that's a compliment; so thank you. And now, sir, please to account for your flight from home, and subsequent behaviour.

CHARLES. Rose, I was your father's favourite as a boy; and he so dazzled my boyish mind with his accounts of India, war, and adventures, that after his departure my mind would dwell on nothing else. After a few years, the desire to follow him overcame all other feelings. I fled from home—managed to reach India—found him, and by his kindness and patronage I joined the army—for I am no secretary, but an officer, Rose—and was by his side on that fatal day when——

ROSE. Oh, say no more—say no more! that one fact binds you to my heart for ever. Oh, Arthur!

CHARLES. Then you forgive me?

ROSE. How freely!

CHARLES. (*his arm round her waist*) And can love me?

ROSE. I can at least *try* very hard, and think I shall succeed.

CHARLES. Dearest Rose! (*embraces her as SIR P. enters, c. from L.—they separate—CHARLES in confusion, ROSE coolly*)

SIR P. Eh, what do I see? it can't be! where are my glasses? By the Lord Harry! it is—my ward and my secretary in each other's arms! Oh, you precious pair! and I've sent Lispington away—here, Thomas! (*calling*) run after Mr. Lispington, and tell him to come back this moment. Hang me if you shan't be married on the spot, miss! As for you, sir, leave the room, preparatory to your leaving the house.

CHARLES. Sir, I——

SIR P. Hold your tongue, sir—you are a vagabond!

ROSE. (*aside to CHARLES*) Don't answer—I'll make all right. Go to the library; I'll soon join you, and take my first German lesson.

Exit CHARLES, R.
(ROSE *bursts out laughing*) Why, Guardy, what a shocking fuss you are making about nothing!

SIR. P. Nothing! when I want my secretary to dictate some letters, and looking for him, at last find him embracing my ward!

ROSE. Well, surely that's a pleasanter occupation than copying letters.

SIR P. You're an impudent—brazen—confounded——

ROSE. (*singing*) "Pray, Goody, please to moderate——"

SIR P. Hold your tongue, you saucy young hussey! If you don't marry Mr. Lispington next week, I'll be hanged——

ROSE. Poor, dear, old guardy! I'm *so* sorry for you, but you're sure to be hanged! Never mind, if nothing interferes to prevent me, I'll be sure to come to your execution; bye, bye. Poor dear bird, he's got his feathers all turned the wrong way; never mind, I'll come and smooth them for him presently. Bye, bye, ogre, I declare I'm quite frightened at you! ugh! you ferocious old gorilla! *Exit, laughing, R.*

SIR. P. What on earth's to become of this girl? but that's Lispington's business, not mine. I wish to goodness people wouldn't go and get shot in India and leave their daughters to me. Ah! deuce take it! there's a twinge; the gout's coming on again. I thought it would!

Re-enter FREDERICK, C. *from* L.

FRED. Here I am, back again you see; always obliging, but it's most excessively fatiguing. I say, my old friend, isn't this rather a weak-minded game of yours? in the course of the last month you've sent me away and fetched me back fifty times.

SIR P. It's not my fault, but I won't send you away any more; you post off to the House of Commons—pshaw, Doctors' Commons: that girl perplexes me so she puts everything out of my head, and get a license and I'll have the whole thing settled off hand.

FRED. That looks more like business; but where *is* Doctors' Commons.

SIR P. Ha, ha! why in the City! St. Paul's Churchyard—you know.

FRED. I know nothing at all about it; couldn't my man go for me?

SIR P. Nonsense; once for all, will you go or not?

FRED. Oh, well, I'll try of course, if I can find my way; but it'll be horribly fatiguing!

SIR P. She's worth it, my boy; a prize, a rich one, a peeress in her own right.

FRED. Eh? a what?

SIR P. No, no; an heiress in her own right—confound that girl, she puts everything out of my——oh! another twinge, she'll kill me before I get rid of her now! but after all you'll earn the money pretty hard, I can tell you, my fine fellow!

FRED. Impossible, never earned a pound in my life!

SIR P. *She'll dress your hair for you!*

FRED. (*alarmed*) Good gracious, Sir Peregrine! I hope you never saw my hair in a state to require dressing. (*goes to mirror*)

SIR P. Well, she'll *undress* it for you, then.

FRED. No, she won't—never allow any liberties taken with my hair.

SIR P. She'll lead you a pretty life!

FRED. Well, I'm easily led, that's one comfort.

SIR P. And drive you to distraction in a month.

FRED. Well, so that she don't ask me to drive *her* anywhere I don't care.

SIR P. What! *will* nothing ruffle your temper?

FRED. My dear Sir Peregrine, I don't believe I've got a particle of temper to ruffle. But, I say, how has *your* temper managed to withstand it so long?

SIR P. Temper—withstand it—what do you mean, sir? where is the mild, gentle disposition I inherited from my forefathers—Placids by nature as by name—gone, sir, gone, irredeemably ruined by that torment of a girl. I am a fury, now, sir, a fury—only the other day I caught myself swearing—aye, you may stare. I often do it; I give you my word of honour, only yesterday, I damned my own coachman.

FRED. Shocking, positively!

SIR P. It *is* shocking, sir; and shall I put up with a girl who gives me the gout and makes me anathematize my own servants—never—take her, sir, take her, and I heartily wish I could give my gout and my diabolical temper into the bargain.

FRED. You are far too liberal—hush, the lady!

Re-enter ROSE, R.

ROSE. Sir Peregrine Placid, do you think I'll put up with this?

SIR P. With what, miss?

ROSE. With what! why, I was going into the stable to see after my mare, and that ill-conditioned creature Robert positively prevented me, saying it was by your orders, as there was a vicious horse there.

SIR P. Robert was quite right.

ROSE. And if you suppose I am to be controlled by Robert, or by you either, Sir Peregrine, I promise you, you are very much mistaken—into the stable I *will* go—when I please—if there were a troop of wild horses there, or tigers either.

SIR P. Then I shall have a padlock put on the door.

ROSE. And I shall have the padlock knocked *off* the door.

SIR P. For shame, Miss Lester; do you perceive Mr. Lisperington?

ROSE. Oh, he's not easy overlooked. (*aside*) I didn't see him though—I must get rid of him. (*aloud*) Good morning, sir.

FRED. Good morning, Miss Rose.

SIR P. Come, to cut this very short, I am determined that this gentleman shall be your husband—he is here for the purpose of announcing his readiness.

ROSE. Dear me, he is extremely good, but suppose I object?

SIR P. You can do so if you please—you'll marry him nevertheless.

ROSE. Whether I will or not?

SIR P. Whether you will or not.

ROSE. Oh, very good; I'm extremely obliged to you for consulting my interest so deeply.

SIR P. You are very welcome. I'll be tormented by you no longer; I know what's for your good, and must be a better judge than a child like you.

ROSE. Child! well I admire that of all things in the world—I'm past seventeen—child indeed!

SIR P. Yes, miss—child! and you are not fit to direct yourself. I ask you are you not much nearer the helpless state of infancy than I am, miss?

ROSE. Certainly, guardy; and are not you much nearer the helpless state of dotage than I am?

SIR P. Why, you impudent young—

ROSE. (*coaxingly*) Come, come, I'm sure my kind indulgent guardian won't part with his affectionate ward.

SIR P. He will though, by all that's good!

ROSE. Although she *does* tease him a little sometimes.

SIR P. It's no use—not a bit of use.

ROSE. He knows how dearly she loves him, and he won't have the heart to send her away.

SIR P. Won't he though?—we shall see.

ROSE. (*putting her arm round his neck*) No, he won't; he's a foolish cross darling, and he won't—

SIR P. Go away; I—I tell you it's no use—

ROSE. But if I tell him I love him better than anyone in the world! and promise to be a good girl, and give him a kiss—(*kisses him*)

SIR P. I—I—(*hugs her*) you darling! (*turning to FRED*) Confound it, sir, didn't I tell you this morning to go about your business?—my ward's not *going* to be married at all!

FRED. Oh! Come, this is rather too much of a good thing!

SIR P. Hold your tongue, sir!—Rose, my pet, don't listen to him; he's got no temper, and he won't drive you anywhere.

FRED. You've been cheyving me backwards and forwards so long that I must put an end to the fatigue, and as the lady's here I'll speak to her myself.

SIR P. But, sir, I tell you——

ROSE. (*aside to SIR PEREGRINE*) Leave him to me, guardy ; I'll dispose of him ; just you go and amuse yourself for ten minutes, there's a dear.

SIR P. Mr. Lispington, I give you ten minutes, and not a moment longer ! (*aside*) I'll go and amuse myself by turning that confounded Fairfax out of the house ! *Exit, C. to R.*

ROSE. Now, sir, may I ask what you have to say to me ?

FRED. My answer is very simple—I am in love——

ROSE. With yourself ?

FRED. No ; with you, charming Rose ! I am aware of the fatigue I am laying up for myself, by falling in love, but I know no cure for it. Can you tell me one ?

ROSE. A cure for love !—yes, sir, you *yourself* are the very best cure I know.

FRED. Ahem ! you are severe, Miss Lester ! and yet your guardian assured me that you were favourably inclined towards me.

ROSE. Oh, he was making fun of you.

FRED. Not he—I defy anybody to get any fun out of me.

ROSE. I'm disposed to agree with you there.

FRED. But whether you are favourable or not, Rose, it is very certain that I am—'hem—horribly—ah—distressingly in love with you !

ROSE. Dear me, I can scarcely credit it ! you must make some mistake.

FRED. No—'hem !—no, by George ! I suppose I know my own mind.

ROSE. That's tantamount to saying you know *nothing*.

FRED. 'Pon my word now, Miss Rose, you are too bad !

ROSE. Well, then, suppose we admit that you *are* desperately in love with me ; you would of course do anything I required of you ?

FRED. Anything—everything—possible or impossible.

ROSE. I must put your love to the test, you know, before I could venture to return it.

FRED. Oh, certainly ! of course—by all means ! (*aside*) She's coming round.

ROSE. Well, I shall do so ; if you really love me, you will do me the great favour of—but you won't do it.

FRED. If I don't, renounce me.

ROSE. You must do me the great favour of—cutting off those moustaches.

FRED. (*horrorstruck*) What !

ROSE. A mere trifle—merely to cut off your moustache.

FRED. A trifle ! why, you might as well ask me to commit suicide at once.

ROSE. You refuse, then?

FRED. My dear Rose, do you know what you are talking about? these moustaches are the admiration of every ball-room in London.

ROSE. And for that very reason I want them off. I should be too jealous if my husband were so much admired.

FRED. Oh, but hang it! you're not serious?

ROSE. Never more so in my life; you must renounce either me or the moustache.

FRED. But, now, just look at them—close—and say if you have the heart to sacrifice them. Whew! the very idea has made me quite hot.

ROSE. I am fixed, sir; off they must come, or off you must go.

FRED. (*solemnly*) Miss Lester, I ask time for consideration.

ROSE. You shall have it, sir—one half hour. Go and reflect.

Enter CHARLES, R.

CHARLES. I beg your pardon.

ROSE. Come in, Mr. Fairfax; half an hour then, sir.

FRED. Yes, oh yes! (*aside*) Confound it: that fellow's got a smooth face. Ahem! I'll go and reflect; I believe the girl's mad. Never mind—now for a battle-royal between the hair and the heiress. *Exit, C. to L.*

ROSE. (*aside*) Ha, ha, ha! I thought I could soon cool his ardour. (*aloud*) Well, Mr. Fairfax, you look remarkably lively, I must say.

CHARLES. Do not banter me, Rose; I am in despair—your guardian has dismissed me—I must leave the house at once.

ROSE. Stuff and nonsense!

CHARLES. He has said it; I must obey him—he is master here.

ROSE. Is he? Don't you be quite so sure of that. I say you shall not go.

CHARLES. It is my only consolation to think that *you* wish me to stay.

ROSE. Indeed I do. What! were you not my dear father's friend? Are you not my—

CHARLES. Oh! finish the sentence, Rose.

ROSE. *My* friend too.

CHARLES. Nothing more?

ROSE. What more would you have?

CHARLES. Can you—need you ask?

ROSE. No, I need not. I am a madcap, Arthur, and cannot talk seriously for two minutes together—there is my hand, let that be my answer.

CHARLES. My dearest Rose! (*kisses her hand as—*)

Re-enter SIR PEREGRINE, *C. from R.*

SIR P. Eh! by all that's good—they're at it again. Why, you consummate rascal, you!

CHARLES. I was but taking leave of Miss Lester, sir.

SIR P. Taking leave of Miss Lester—taking leave of *your* senses, sir, I should say—as Miss Lester has taken leave of all propriety and decorum. Bless my soul! I can't come into my drawing room without finding my secretary kissing my ward. Now, sir, perhaps, as you have taken leave of Miss Lester, you will be good enough to take leave of my house. As for you, miss, I'll speak to *you* when this gentleman has gone.

ROSE. I hope you'll speak to me before then, guardy, because this gentleman is not going at all.

SIR P. You are mistaken, miss; I have dismissed him from my service.

ROSE. And I have taken him into mine.

SIR P. Oh! as companion, I suppose—very pretty, upon my word. You are a modest young lady, *you* are.

ROSE. I hope I am, sir. I engage Mr. Fairfax to teach me German.

SIR P. German! Can't you say Sanscrit, or Coptic, or Ojibbeway; I'll be bound you'll learn as much of one as the other,—and suppose I object to this pretty arrangement?

ROSE. I should be very sorry, of course; but I shall make the pretty arrangement all the same.

SIR P. Will you, by—ahem!

ROSE. I will, by—ahem!

CHARLES. Pray do not let me be the cause of any dissension?

SIR P. Dissension!—you impudent puppy. I request you to leave the house.

ROSE. And I request you to remain in it.

SIR P. By the powers! this is too much. Am I to be bearded in my own house?

ROSE. Why, dear me, guardy, you're not bearded at all; your chin is as smooth as mine.

SIR P. Oh, you pert hussey. Now, sir, are you going?

CHARLES. Sir, I—

ROSE. No, sir, he is not.

SIR P. Then, hang me, if I don't ring for the servants to put him out.

ROSE. And I'll discharge the first servant that answers the bell.

SIR P. You discharge *my* servants.

ROSE. Certainly. You want to discharge my German master; why shouldn't I discharge your servants?

SIR P. Well, of all the cool, impudent, provoking--ugh!--another twinge. You little serpent, you've brought on the gout again, and, I believe, will drive me mad into the bargain.

Enter THOMAS, C. from L.

Well, what the deuce do *you* want?

THOMAS. Mr. Lispington's compliments, sir, and will you lend him your razors?

SIR P. Razors!

ROSE. (*aside*) Is he going to cut them off? Is his love for me really stronger than his vanity?

SIR P. Razors! oh, I see—this is more of your work, Miss, you have driven that estimable young man to despair, and he is going to put an end to himself; he's wise—anything to escape *you*. Yes, Thomas, take them to him—at least, take him one, and bring me the other. I'm sure I want it as badly as he does.

Exit THOMAS, C. to R.

So, Miss, I hope you're satisfied now? You have driven your affianced husband to suicide, and you will soon see the corpse of your guardian rolling on his own Kidderminster. (ROSE *bursts out laughing*) Why you unnatural, unfeeling—confound it, Miss, will you leave off laughing?

ROSE. Will you leave off being such a comical old guardy then?

SIR P. Comical—damn it, this is too much—oh! my great toe! (*throws himself on sofa*)

ROSE. (*tenderly*) Is it so bad then—what shall she do to take away the nasty gout?

SIR P. What shall she do to bring on five hundred fits more?

Enter THOMAS, with razor, C. from R.

THOMAS. Here's the razor, sir.

SIR P. Give it to me—here's relief at last.

ROSE. Give it to *me*, Thomas. (*takes it*)

SIR P. Why you scoundrel, what do you mean by disobeying me?

THOMAS. Sir, I—

SIR P. (*throwing cushion at him*) Get out, you rascal!

Exit THOMAS, C. to L.

Give me that razor.

ROSE. No, no—violent little darlings mustn't be trusted with edged tools. But come, my dear, pleasant guardy—

SIR P. Ugh!

ROSE. Now saying "Ugh" in that way is not being pleasant. Come, I'll do anything you wish me, and that, I'm sure, will put the gout to flight.

SIR P. No, it won't—I'm in for it for a month; but let's see what you'll do—give up that Fairfax at once.

ROSE. Willingly and entirely. (CHARLES *exclaims—aside to him*) but not Arthur Vernon.

SIR P. Good—I feel a little better, but I daren't trust you near me any longer; you *must* be married, and you must marry Lispington.

ROSE. Well, if he has used his razors, perhaps I will.

CHARLES. Rose!—

SIR P. Who the devil are you calling Rose? and what do you mean by using his razors? you don't mean to say you'll marry a man after he's committed suicide, and perhaps he's doing it now—here, Thomas!

ROSE. No fear, guardy—Mr. Lispington *professed* unbounded love for me—I merely requested him to give me a proof of it by shaving off his moustache.

CHARLES. (*laughing loudly aside*) Come—I think I'm pretty safe.

SIR P. Confound your impudence, sir—but wait a moment, my fine fellow—I'll soon settle your business for you.

CHARLES. Excuse my ill manners, sir, but—

SIR P. Hold your tongue, sir. Why, what the deuce made you ask him to shave off his moustache? but he'll do it—of course—he'd shave off his eyebrows—shave his head into the bargain, to secure you.

ROSE. I'm by no means so sure of that.

SIR P. Don't talk nonsense.

ROSE. I never do, guardy.

SIR P. Don't talk *at all*, then—the idea of a man preferring a pair of moustaches to a pretty wife and a prettier income is a piece of such preposterous idiotcy that—

Re-enter FREDERICK, *looking at the razor, C. from R.*

ROSE. (*aside, R.*) Safe!

CHARLES. (*aside*) The moustache wins!

SIR P. (C.) Why—

FRED. (L.) Miss Lester, I am plunged into the profoundest despair; the agony I have undergone in the last ten minutes, both mental and physical, is something frightful—unbounded. Delirious as is the love I bear you, I feel that the sacrifice of these moustaches would undermine my health, shorten my days, and drive me into a state of hopeless imbecility.

ROSE. As you please, sir.

CHARLES. (*aside*) Lamentable puppy.

SIR P. Why, do you mean to tell me, sir, that you are lunatic enough to give up £1,200 a year and the prettiest girl

within fifty miles of St. Paul's for the sake of a pair of hideous moustaches?

FRED. Hideous!

SIR P. Revoltingly hideous—be a man, sir, and cut them off at once.

FRED. Be a man and cut them off—good gracious—I should never dare to look a woman in the face again—Miss Lester—I appeal to——

ROSE. It's no use on earth appealing to me, sir, my decision is final—Rose Lester without your moustache, or, your moustache without Rose Lester.

FRED. I can't do it, I should never survive it——

SIR P. (*aside to him*) You idiot, cut them off, and when you're married, let them grow again.

FRED. (*to him*) Grow again! would they ever attain the graceful pitch of perfection they present now?—old man, you talk you know not what.

SIR P. Do I! at all events I'll *do* I know what. Here—Thomas!

FRED. (*to CHARLES*) Confound it, sir, what are you laughing at?

SIR P. That's right, give it him, I can't get him out of my house. Thomas!

Enter THOMAS, C. from L.—SIR PEREGRINE whispers him whilst the dialogue continues. Exit THOMAS, C. to L.

FRED. I asked you, sir, what you were laughing about?

CHARLES. My own thoughts, sir.

FRED. Then what the deuce were you *thinking* about?

CHARLES. I presume my thoughts are my own, sir.

FRED. If they have any reference to me, sir——

ROSE. Pray don't quarrel, Mr. Lispington, it's so very fatiguing. (*THOMAS enters, C. from L., with shaving dish and brush, he goes to SIR PEREGRINE, and unperceived by FREDERICK, they bring down chair behind him, SIR PEREGRINE takes brush and dish*)

FRED. You are right, Miss Lester, but that bare faced fellow is jealous—he knows he could never grow such a pair of——

SIR P. Now then! (*THOMAS seizes FREDERICK by both arms and forces him into chair, holding him there, whilst SIR PEREGRINE skips about before him with shaving brush*)

FRED. Eh! here! I say, what are you about?

ROSE. Why, guardy!

CHARLES. (*laughing*) Ha, ha, ha, ha.

SIR P. If you don't know what's for your own good I'm going to teach you; hold him tight, Thomas——

FRED. But I protest—this is an assault—help!——

SIR P. It's no use—off those moustaches come, or I'm a Dutchman; so—there! (*attempts to lather him*—ROSE and CHARLES *burst into a laugh*)

FRED. (*struggling*) No, no—help—murder! If you want to kill me, do it—but let me die in my moustache! Help! Miss Lester—

SIR P. (*taking razor*) If you don't keep still, I shall have your nose off as well as your moustache!

FRED. Help—fiend—ruffian—mur—der!

ROSE. Stop, guardy; pray, stop—the sacrifice is useless—for if Mr. Lispington came with a bald head as well as a bald lip, I would not marry him.

SIR P. What!

FRED. There! you hear—it's no use—she won't marry me, and hang me if I'd marry her! Let me go! Confound you, let go! (*shakes off THOMAS and rushes to side, seizing poker*) They are safe!—safe! Now let's see who'll venture to come near me again.

SIR P. You confounded blockhead—put down that poker and come and be shaved!

FRED. Never—with life!

ROSE. There is no occasion, guardy. You know when I say a thing I mean it, and I have said that I will not marry Mr. Lispington.

SIR P. Why, you hussey! you promised. Confound it—I shall have you left on my hands after all.

ROSE. No, you won't, guardy. I promised, conditionally, and the conditions have not been complied with. Once for all—those moustaches repel me; still, I will relieve you of my mad ways for the future, by transferring them to this gentleman!

FRED. Eh!

SIR P. What! my secretary! Why, you said you'd give him up.

ROSE. I said I would give up your secretary, Mr. Fairfax. I do so: and take for my husband your nephew, Mr. Arthur Vernon!

SIR P. Eh? pooh! and yet, now I look again, I do believe it is Arthur Vernon. Why, you vagabond, you—

CHARLES. Suspend your judgment, sir, till you have heard my story, and I think you will acquit me of all blame. Suffice it to say, sir, that I am an officer in Her Majesty's service.

SIR P. An officer!

FRED. (*aside, L.*) And without moustaches!

ROSE. At all events, guardy, I am satisfied with Arthur's past, and will, myself, be responsible for his future.

SIR P. (C.) Well, well, I suppose I must submit. You will be

married, at all events, and I may escape the gout and the lunatic asylum. I wish you joy, Arthur.

CHARLES. (R.C.) The possession of my darling Rose secures it, Uncle.

FRED. (L.) I wish you joy, too; but you'll find it dreadfully fatiguing.

ROSE. (*coming forward*, R.C.) As I have been pardoned, and am at peace with all here, may I trust that you, also, will kindly extend your forgiveness to the WILFUL WARD.

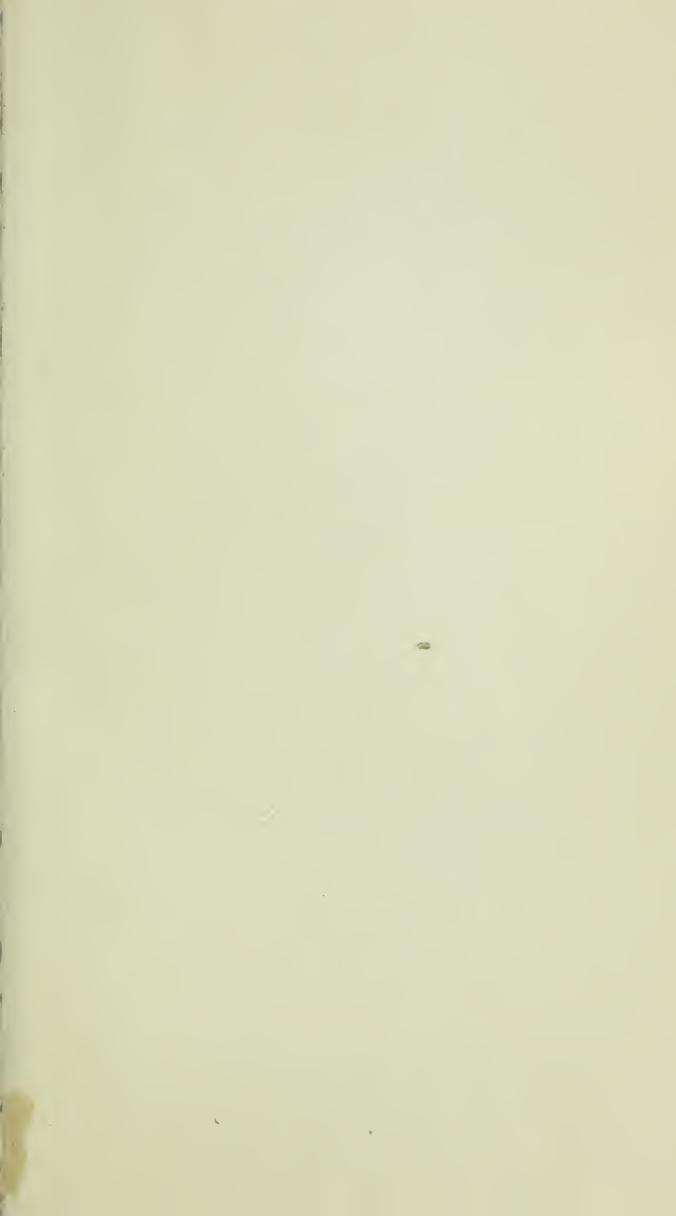
CHAS.
R.

ROSE.

SIR P.

FRED.
L.

Curtain.



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